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LETTERS FROM THE NILE



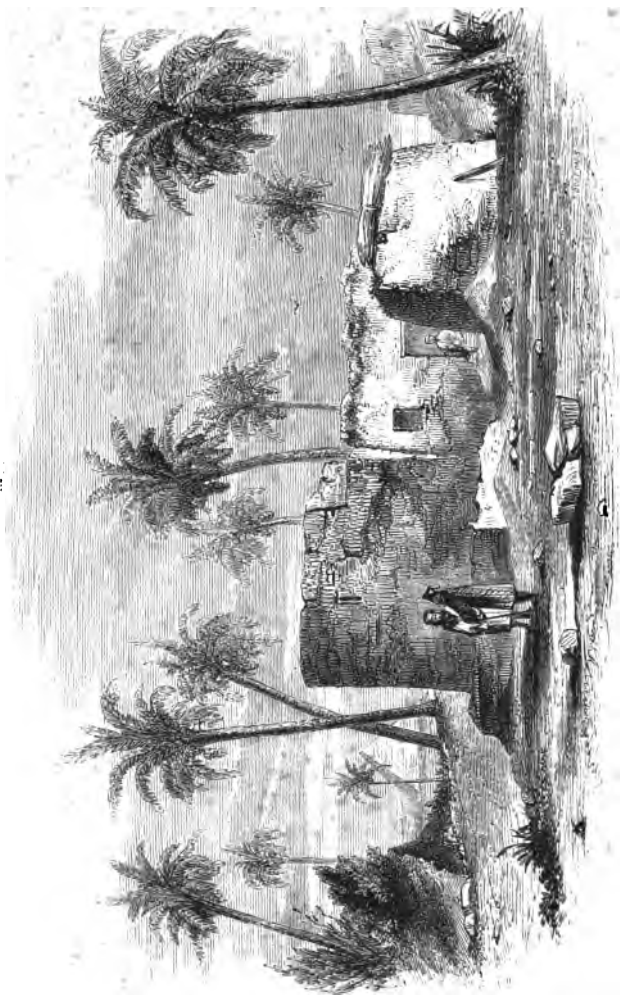
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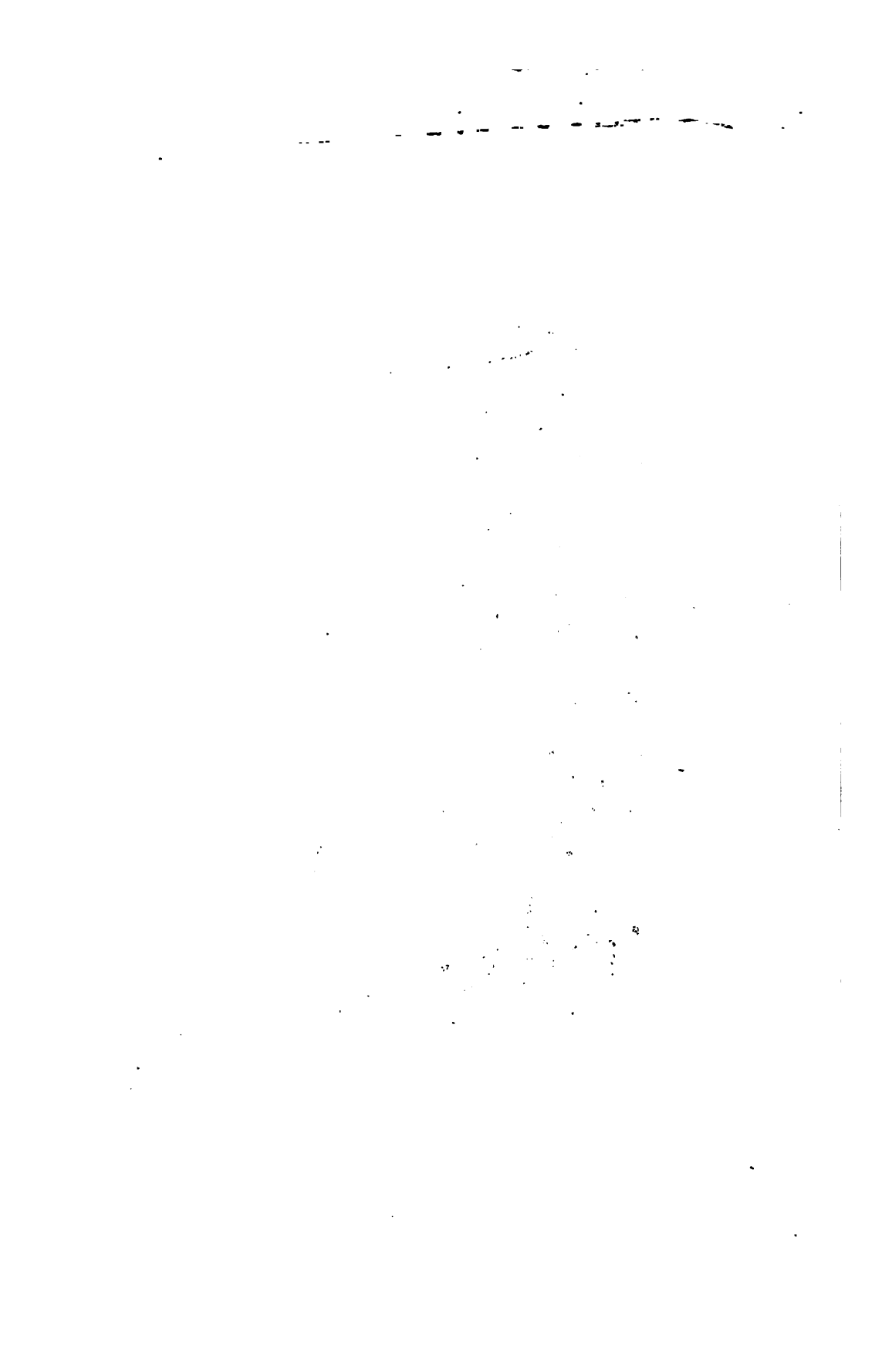






Governor's House, Sakaya.

TH



LETTERS FROM THE NILE

BY

J. W. CLAYTON,

13TH LIGHT DRAGOONS.

"Du sublime au ridicule il n'y a q'un pas."

"In pity spare us when we do our best
To make as much waste paper as the rest."

LONDON:

THOMAS BOSWORTH, 215 REGENT STREET.

1854.

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PREFACE.

THE few pages here offered to the public were not originally intended for such a distinction, as the natural dread of criticism attending the first leap into the world of literature chased away any doubts I may ever have entertained upon the subject ; and I contented myself, accordingly, with submitting my letters and sketches, descriptive of a short journey in Egypt, to a friend in England, who, upon my arrival in my own country, earnestly entreated me to allow them to see the light. Trusting,

therefore, to the leniency of those who undertake the task of perusal, I boldly venture to launch them upon the waves of public opinion, trusting that a gale of prosperity may bear them safely to a friendly haven.

J. W. C.

11. PORTMAN SQUARE,
1854.

LETTERS FROM THE NILE.

LETTER I.

I'm gone,—and shivering in the gale
The bark unfurls her snowy sail ;
And whistling o'er the bending mast
Loud sings on high the freshening blast ;
And I must from this land be gone,
For I would seek another zone.

MY DEAR ———,

It is a quarter past eight on the morning of the 4th of October, 1853. We (that is, four of us) are in the midst of the fearful bustle generally attendant upon the starting of the tidal train from London Bridge to Paris; the weather is gloomy and dispiriting; huge bowlders of clouds are driven forward by the breath of a howling autumnal wind; but, however, the hopes of a gay and prosperous voyage warm our hearts

with their sunshine. For when did the recklessness of youth ever pause to consider the aspect of outward and commonplace appearances, which did not interfere with any determined or favourite pursuit? So, after having been jostled against the elderly females, dogs, and children, who are always in the way upon these occasions, we seek refuge in our carriage; the window is drawn up, the engine screams, and we are off. In two hours we are on board the steamer, which is waiting for us in Folkestone harbour, groaning, panting, and puffing like a stranded whale that is struggling to get into the open sea; the cords are at length cast off, the usual adieus made,—“ Good bye, Charles, dear; take care of mamma,” and all that sort of thing, and the vessel glides from her moorings.

By the fair goddess who rose from the wave there is something truly joyous, fresh, and exhilarating in the breeze that wafts us on as we bound carelessly over the foaming waters, when the land disappears from our sight; as well as the healthy complexion of the passengers, the different tints and hues of which are curiously varying, and who are endeavouring to appear easy and graceful, and trying hard to look as if they never felt better in their lives. But alas,

Nature is a bad dissembler, and everything must turn up!

It blows great guns and small arms, the deck is afloat, and the steward demands his fare, which, just at the moment you wish to be thrown into the sea, you remember with agony is in the remotest depths of your innermost pockets. The cabin (the atmosphere of which could be easily cut with a tolerably sharp knife) is swarming with individuals, in every stage of alarm and illness; one old woman lies flat on her back, after a large dinner on shore, and naturally indulges in nightmare, and alarms the ship's crew with cries of "*Murder*;" and in the centre of the floor a poor gentleman is suffering under an utter prostration of strength and intellect, with an eau de Cologne bottle thrust into his nose, and everybody walking over him: so, after three hours indulging in this sort of amusement, Boulogne appears in sight, and a horrible confusion ensues, as every one prepares to be the first in the Salle de Douane to get his passport signed.

Here we have an opportunity of noticing the contrast, the country, the people, and their manners and customs, and of those we have left three hours before.

The peculiarity of the latter strikes the traveller painfully as he is gently eased of any object of *virtù*; these obliging individuals consider superfluous; and we could not help remarking what a limited state of education the country must be in, when they took away the India-rubber tub (belonging to a gentleman of cleanly habits), and confiscated it as an infernal machine for blowing up the Emperor!! As, in fact, they do not know what a tub is; for one morning when, at an hôtel in France, I requested a bath in my room, they brought me the dish of the tart I had had for dinner the night before.

So, after having been robbed and rifled by the douaniers, we were whirled along in the express train of the "Chemin de Fer du Nord," (in the carriages of which establishment may be observed, as in England, the same ingenious and profitable invention of the company at the expense of unwary travellers, consisting in a shelf of net-work, intended for the reception of sticks and umbrellas, which the unthinking passenger, suddenly startled from the sleeping oblivion of a long journey, naturally leaves behind him,) through 130 miles of the north of France, closely resembling the most uninteresting part of Cam-

bridgeshire. We pass Amiens, notable for the peace concluded there in 1802, between Great Britain and France, Spain, and Holland, and arrived in Paris at nine P.M., having travelled from one capital to the other in thirteen hours.

Nothing interesting to the reader occurred till we reached the Hôtel de Bedford, which, being very full, we were obliged to mount 128 steps to our bed-room, at a giddy height from the ground, and with a great scarcity of water in the jugs, as the French, being so clean, they do not require it; so they think the English must be excessively dirty to have recourse to so much.

The first day of our journey has come to a close, so we turn in, wishing you, kind reader, a very good night.

I will write again soon.

Ever yours sincerely,

* * * * *

LETTER II.

Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ.—VIRGIL.*

MY DEAR ———,

EVERY one is acquainted with the sights of Paris, which of course were not overlooked by us; and you would be as tired as we were upon mounting the summit of the Panthéon, though the splendid view of Paris amply repaid us, were I to recount the histories of every palace, church, the gardens and squares, which all form one delightful *ensemble*, and the architecture rich in the splendour of the successive ages through which it has passed: so suffice it to say, among our day's exertions we devoted part to the Hôtel des Invalides, Church of La Madeleine, the Morgue, Nôtre Dame, Place de la Bastille, where now

* And the lengthening shadows extend from the lofty mountains.

stands the Colonne de Juillet,—a monument erected where the dreaded prison once stood, and in commemoration of the victims of the Revolution, and stands upon a spot that, before and after it was erected, has witnessed many of the bloody contests during the stormy periods of the country.

But having no time for historical researches, follow us in the noise and confusion of four gentlemen starting for the Chemin de Fer de Lyon, after dining at the Café de Paris, which, together with paying the bill, opened our eyes considerably; which, unfortunately, we found at the café, were too large for our stomachs.

The eight o'clock night-train bears us to Châlons sur Saône, which we reached in a deluge of rain and pitch darkness at four A.M. Our baggage is for a long time invisible, so, trusting to Providence, we dive into a den of howling Frenchmen; but none of us having reached perfection in the language of the country, we could not appreciate their furious vociferations, but with the help of God and a pocket dictionary we soon hope to conquer all obstacles.

But to return. We find, however, our portmanteau at the top of an omnibus, preparing to go

somewhere; so we take the desperate resolution of accompanying it, and we enter the vehicle, which is full to the brim of passengers, also following their luggage. They were, as usual, noisy and dirty: the latter misfortune is rather cherished by them as a defence against cold, as an old lady, who was our railway companion, was supplied with a thin coating. It is, however, unavoidable when travelling in this manner.

The first faint streak of dawn was tingeing the eastern sky as we embarked on board one of the Saône steamers, which is so curiously constructed as to bring every body in violent contact with his neighbour,—immensely long; and the boiler inspires one with a perpetual dread of being blown up. The carpet which spreads the deck is cleverly constructed to contain a large amount of rain water for nearly ten or eleven hours. The *mêlée* on deck is pleasing, from the variety of the costumes of the gentlemen, some of whom are standing in heroic attitudes, wrapped in their blankets or togas, with a hole in the middle for the head to come through, topped by every genus of cap, many of straw, and closely resembling an English beehive; terminating in breeches

and boots of the sort used for the discovery of Sir John Franklin. In the meantime, the countenances of the individuals bring forcibly back to memory the yew-trees in ancient churchyards, cut and trimmed into every variety of pattern,—in fact, a magnificent mixture of Julius Cæsars and Cherokee Indians.

We are off, and going bravely with the swift stream, which bears us towards Lyons. The banks of the river are adorned with vineyards, orchards, and the elegant châteaux of the French *noblesse*. We are now passing Tournûs, with its time-worn towers and Gothic church rearing proudly above the humbler buildings. We still steam on, with a fair breeze; and as the passengers are familiar and amusing, we endeavour to bear up under the bad accommodation afforded us. Down below there is scarcely any light or air, and the people are lying in heaps on the top of each other, and could not be many degrees below the temperature that the prisoners experienced in the Black Hole of Calcutta.

A long line of heather hills, not unlike the Pentland, now burst upon us, bright with the early rays of the sun, sloping in gentle undulations till they are lost in the distance. They are approached by a

fertile pasture, though marshy, land, thickly studded with the national poplar, which borders both sides of the river. The remainder of the Saône, till within four miles of Lyons, is monotonous and uninteresting.

We are at length at Lyons, a fine town, built upon the high ground which rises from the river. When we arrived in the great square, a review of the troops was being conducted by M. le Général Richepense, a friend of the Emperor's.

But I must not tire you with such trifling incidents. So up to the Mont St. Just, where let those who delight in the beautiful ascend, and there a view, the glories of which they never dreamt, will unfold in all its stupendous grandeur. Everything that is various and lovely in the poetry of Nature is spread out to enchant the eye and elevate the soul. Immediately below is the town of Lyons, with its labyrinth of streets, its spires and squares, intersected by the silver belts of the Rhone and of the Saône, whose snake-like windings ever and anon glitter till they are lost in the distance. A long range of the hills of the French vineyards extend for miles, and lessen wave after wave, flushed with the purple vine,

till they finally rest at the foot of the majestic Alps, upon whose hoary summits the sun is casting his last dying ray, tingeing with a thread of gold the summits of the Alpine range, which, with Mont Blanc, whose towering peaks are wrapped in the mists of the far horizon, form a wide, wide boundary to this enchanting view.

It is almost needless for me to mention that Lyons is one of the most populous and thriving towns of France, and boasts of historical associations connected with the several bloody revolutionary contests which have disturbed the country, or to recount the high and patriotic heads that have there rolled on the scaffold, for the annals of the country will furnish what it is not my purpose to discuss.

Yours faithfully, in haste,

* * * * *

LETTER III.

And now where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted ;
Though in their souls which thus each other thwarted ;
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed ;
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters war within themselves to wage.

MY DEAR ———,

THE next morning dawned through columns of rain, that descended from dark and heavy masses of clouds, which seemed jealous of permitting daylight to the world. Down it came as we embarked at five in the morning on our watery way to Avignon, amidst the direst confusion that pitch darkness and French porters can possibly create, as the people scrambled

and clawed after their luggage, which was rapidly disappearing from before them.

The scene, nevertheless, had its own degree of poetry; a lurid glare cast from a fiercely-burning pine-torch, hissing and spluttering in the falling rain, shed a wild and unearthly character on the scene: it seemed rather like Pandemonium broken loose and undergoing some of its devilish rites, as the bearded douaniers, the shaggy and fierce proportions of the *pay-sans*, glanced, shrieking, swearing, and jabbering, round the luggage-weighing machines.

We at last sped onward through the most picturesque scenery of the beautiful Rhone, whose banks, clothed with the abundant grape and adorned with the mouldering remains of the edifices of feudal times, bright green valleys smiling from the embraces of barren masses of gigantic rock, form the contrast of the grand and the simple, resembling closely the scenery so remarkable on the Rhine.

At first the incessant rain prevented us from emerging from the hot and noisy hole that they facetiously called a cabin, where the heavy atmosphere, loaded with the fumes of tobacco, garlic, cooking, and saturated garments of the mob there assembled, rolled

in clouds through the diminutive portholes, which jealously admitted the fresh air; in fact, it rather refused to enter, or to have anything to do with this stifling place—this sort of *water hell*.

There is a gentleman sitting opposite to me with his spoon down his throat, evidently searching for something he had swallowed by mistake; and through the dense fog another individual may be observed (having nothing better to do) combing his whiskers with a fork, and whose head looked as if it had been mowed: but amidst all the jabber, heat, and effluvium consistent with the manners and character of the inmates of this river purgatory, I was forcibly struck by a young French girl, who looked like an angel that had strayed from heaven to hell, and was so little influenced by the present state of affairs that she was kneeling on the seat and gazing through the window into the falling rain; her lips were uttering her morning prayers, and her large eyes glanced mournfully towards the heaven she adored—

“ At segura quies, et nescia fallere vita.”

By her side two men are gambling, surrounded by a crowd of waiters, wrangling women, and squalling

infants. Next to these worthies there is an English clergyman, who meekly but vainly attempts to confine his attention to a French conversation-book, though his ideas must be terribly harassed by the blasphemous oaths and boisterous laughter which reverberate through the place. Yet again in a remote corner, aloof, pale, indignant, and silent, sits a fair English lady, whose bright eyes flash and her beautiful lips curl with contempt and the conscious superiority of the rank she holds in her own aristocratic land; while opposite to her a French lady, who has evidently forgotten to bring her money on board, is wrangling with the waiters, who accuse her of cheating: but, like the rest of her sex, the volubility of her lively tongue conquered every obstacle, and by dint of the most violent vociferation she escaped up the ladder (not without disclosing a very dirty pair of stockings).

The sun, by great exertion on his part, had at length dispelled the damp mists, rain, and exhalations, and shone forth in all his glory as we emerged from this chamber of horrors; tingeing the drops of rain on the leaves of the numberless forests of vines, which again smiled forth green in the effulgence. We found we were at this moment passing the town of

Vienne, which stretches its picturesque buildings along the left bank of the river, at the foot of precipitous hills: running up into a small valley between two heights, crowned with ruined castles of the middle ages.

Vienne is one of the most ancient towns of France, having long flourished before Lyons existed. When I was at school I remember having been punished for not repeating the line from Cæsar, which tells of the opulence of this town,—“*Accolit Alpinis opulenta Vienna colonis.*” The river from hence winds in graceful curves, presenting delightful prospects, till the old town of Valence appears, surrounded and flanked by its feudal battlements.

We next pass St. Peray, reposing quietly amid the slopes of the hills, which are still covered with one uninterrupted vineyard, and is a town worthy of the delicious wine that is made there, and from which it derives its name.

Soon after passing St. Peray, the dark and rugged summits of the French Alps appear to tower to the clouds; the extreme buttress is Mont Ventoux, and continues in sight as far as Avignon.

We next pass underneath the bridge of Pont

Esprit, which has nineteen arches, and is said to be the longest stone bridge in the world; its whole length stretches from the town far on to the other bank of the river. This town also recedes and vanishes; and mountains, bathed in the beautiful azure tinge of the distance peculiar to this southern climate, burst into view in the greatest variety. Also the town of Orange, which is prettily situated. It is a place rich in the stories of ages, the dumb and dilapidated mementos of which crown every eminence. They chiefly consist of Roman remains, and stand forth like gigantic phantoms of the past. The town originally belonged to the Nassau family, and is where William III. of England derived his former title from of Prince of Orange.

Soon after leaving this town we pass a barren, stony plain, which appears in the midst of fertility; it seems as if it had suddenly been blasted in some great and unknown retribution.

Onwards we glide till a turn in the river discloses the spires of Avignon, and the stupendous towers and walls of its Papal palace. This ancient city of the Popes is still surrounded by its original lofty walls and watch-towers, which continue their course till

they terminate at a ruinous Gothic bridge, reaching only half way across the Rhone. We here disembark, and are mercilessly bored by heaps of porters, who are renowned for their thievish propensities, and consequently become infuriated at their lack of custom. We, however, happily arrived at the Hôtel de l'Europe at about three o'clock in the afternoon, and from thence strolled through the steep, narrow, and dirty streets, towards the palace of the Popes; the walls, as they rise up in proud magnificence, upon approach strike the observer with awe at their immensity: some of its walls are above one hundred feet in height, and the masonry is of enormous thickness.

With the help of a clever guide the crowd of associations came thick and vivid to our memory. We were told that the palace was founded by Clement V., the first French Pope, who reigned at Avignon in 1319. It is now the head-quarters of a regiment. Here Petrarch was a guest; and in its dungeons Rienzi, the last of the Roman tribunes, was a prisoner. We also discussed many other interesting reminiscences of the dark ages, as dismal as the walls of its dungeons.

However, when we emerged from these fearful abodes of bygone misery, we were enabled the more to appreciate the glorious range of view which burst upon us from the battlements,—those purple and distant mountains, over whose jagged peaks the evening mist languidly rolls, their rugged sides standing out in bold magnificence against the glowing sky, as they seem to frown over the quiet, smiling country, intersected by the glittering windings of the Rhone; upon whose silver breast are sleeping the violet hues of the fading skies, as the last, soft, melancholy glory of sunset trembled in the West. All worldly thoughts, of gain or loss, of grief or care, disappear, and are chased away by the gentle influences of this beautiful sunset hour. What care I now? or how little do I think of the petty sorrows that are left behind in the cold land of England, as this sublime languor steals gradually over the senses, and invites the spirit to bow and to worship at the altar of the beautiful? Horace quotes the fine, balmy climate of Avignon,—

“Avenio ventosa, sine vento venenosa, cum vento fastidiosa.”

To a denizen of the cold North the soft air and breezes are inexpressibly soothing. A few days ago

we were shivering in greatcoats in the chill October of England, when here we find even a light sailor's jacket oppressive.

We leave this beautiful place by to-night's train for Marseilles—9th of October.

Ever yours,

* * * * *

LETTER IV.

Fair clime, where every season smiles
Benignant o'er those lonely isles—

* * * * *

There mildly dimpling Ocean's cheek,
Reflects the tints of many a peak ;

* * * * *

And if at times a transient breeze
Breaks the blue crystal of the seas,
Or sweeps one blossom from the trees,
How welcome is each gentle air
That wakes and wafts the odours there !

MY DEAR ———,

You must be aware that Marseilles, with its bustling quays, perpetually swarming with people of every nation under the sun, presents a most amusing variety. As you walk along the streets, fresh sights, sounds, and languages salute you. There are the

thick-lipped Nubian and the gaudy Armenian, Turks, Russians, and, of course, plenty of English; muleteers, flower-girls, the lazy douaniers, and the sack-like soldiers, are mingled together. There is a bluff English sailor, who looks upon them all with contempt, making advances to a pretty grisette, totally unheeding the violent gesticulations and remonstrances of her little French protector. The cafés swarm with every species of life, human and animal.

Marseilles, as every one knows, is the most important seaport of France; and the harbour is most convenient, and a little larger than Prince's Dock at Liverpool. It is very well managed, and is capable of holding 1200 merchant vessels. Wherever the eye turns in the country skirting the town, it meets the superbest views. From the margin of the old harbour, lined with quays, the ground rises on all sides covered with houses, forming a basin, or amphitheatre, terminating only with the surrounding chain of hills.

My impulses prompted me, when daylight dawned the morning after our arrival, to wander forth; and upon turning a projection of rock, for the first time in my life the azure waters of the Mediterranean

Sea shone forth before me in all their glorious brightness, under a serene and unclouded sky. From the Observatory, which crests the height adjoining the town, the whole of Marseilles and its harbour are visible; also the Château d'If (the scene of Dumas' novel), which is perched upon a rock that, with two others, which also contain forts, command the entrance of the harbour. On the other side the coast is lined with green hills, which retreat from the coast of their tideless sea till they join the main chain, which is grand and precipitous.

Two days were sufficient for us to lionise the town, which does not boast of great edifices or magnificent colonnades, as it is entirely dedicated to the commerce of France; so on the night of the second day we embarked on board the steamer, which was lying at the entrance to the harbour. The night was soft and gentle; breezes fanned the air, as in the height of an English summer; and the stars slept in the sky. Travelling in this manner, the change from one species of the beautiful to the other is so rapid and various, that one has scarcely time to consider which is most preferable. The next morning rose brightly as the salt wave, moved onwards by

the ceaseless chase of the winds, bore us far in the open sea, sparkling with every hue in the rays of the sun, whose chariot rolled high through the heavens when I awoke; and soon afterwards the last projection of land fades in the blue distance, and the serene ocean of heaven mingled with the waters of the Mediterranean.

And so farewell to *la belle France*!

The steamer is to be our home for sixty hours, so we reconcile ourselves immediately to our prison of the sea. We rise about seven; the bell sounds for breakfast, and assembles all in the saloon at nine, where, if it is rough weather, the passengers one by one vary in hue, and retire as gracefully as possible. We afterwards while away the time on deck till noon, when we reassemble for lunch, facetiously called "tiffin." The afternoon is spent in the same indolent manner: the ladies knit and talk scandal; the elderly gentlemen talk of crops and politics; the younger climb the rigging, and indulge in the *dolce far niente* on the paddle-boxes, for which amusement they pay five shillings to every sailor who can succeed in chalking their shoes. Dinner is at *four*, supper at seven; the latter is, I suppose, upon the school prin-

ciple, "he who eats most meat shall have most pudding,"—a most economical business.

Our first day at sea draws to a close rapidly, for there is little or no twilight this time of year, and the sun sinks to his bed of glory, tingeing the light fleecy clouds with the hues of the rose, as they quietly float in an atmosphere flooded with those tender violet tints so peculiar to this fair climate. Soon after, the pale empress of the sky rises from her silver palaces, and gleams sweetly through the soft airs of a Mediterranean night. Oh, what a pure, buoyant happiness fills the soul!—surely a foretaste of a better existence. He must be less than human who can gaze without emotion upon that column of moonlight slumbering on the silver bosom of this halcyon sea, spread out so bright, broad, and beautiful.

How this must bore you!

Yours truly,

* * * * *

LETTER V.

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense and cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contained no tomb.—BYRON.

And now, O Malta ! since thou'st got us,
Thou little military hothouse !
I'll not offend with words uncivil,
And wish thee rudely at the devil ;
But only stare from out my casement,
And ask—for what is such a place meant ?

MY DEAR ———,

ANOTHER brilliant morning dawned upon us.
Upon arriving on deck, the islands of Corsica and
Sardinia on either side reposed in a cloudless sky,—
we were passing through the Straits of Bonifacio,
parts of which are not broader than the Thames ;
bright smiling groves top the precipices which over-

hang the beach, twining themselves in garlands of various green, and carpeting the rocky sides of the two islands. As we passed from out of the straits into the open sea, the land of Sardinia, which abounds in game, and is of immense extent, still continues in sight: it here changes its character; barren and jagged rocks jut out, dark and frowning, and a home for the outlaw and wild sea-bird.

No artist can possibly do justice to the perfect, clear blue of these waters; Nature is their only painter. The ship glides smoothly on, without any apparent effort; every one is on deck, and seemingly happy and joyous,—excepting perhaps one pale, fair face, for those large and lustrous eyes and the burning spot upon the cheek tell their own melancholy tale. Why is it that around her every loud jest is stilled? The rough sailor glances bashfully towards her, and moves near her with quiet respect. Poor girl, she has left her home for a warmer climate than that, to which she may never return, and where she will breathe with less effort the remainder of her tender life, reviving and flickering, alas, only too soon to fade from that frail form, like an expiring lamp in an alabaster urn. Yet Hope bears her up, and whispers

to the anxious mother's heart—*Hope*, the nurse of life; and yet some say its cradle is the grave.

The next land that appeared was the Island of Marriette, a black rock which rises alone precipitously from the sea, and a gentleman told us it was the Botany Bay of Naples. In the evening the moon shone over the sea, and people became sentimental; a youthful clergyman especially so, having only married two days before starting on his voyage, and at present evidently prefers his wife to his profession, as soon distinct signs of honeymoon appeared (which must have been a very uncomfortable one), in an accordion, which emitted the most doleful sounds, chiefly on account of his not being able comfortably to arrange the instrument, having his arm at the same time round the waist of his spouse, which was very large.

At breakfast time the next morning we discovered the coast of Sicily lessening in the distance, and soon afterwards the Isle of Gozo came into view, which is supposed to be the scene of the honeymoon of Calypso and Ulysses. It is separated by narrow straits from the adjoining rock, which represents the much-famed Island of Malta, the key

to the East, and the half-way house of the Mediterranean.

After coasting a couple of hours, during which time the youthful and reverend gentleman first exerted the rights of his calling, and pointed out to a nicety the exact spot where St. Paul landed after his shipwreck, we then entered a watery ravine of battlemented cliffs, and came to an anchor in the quarantine harbour.

La Valette, named after the knight who founded it, is a mongrel town, half Eastern and half European; most of the streets consist of flights of steps, and the verandahs of the houses on each side resembling enormous balustrades. The cooped-up inhabitants of this town spend their domestic moments in the true Eastern manner, upon the tops of their houses, which are chiefly flat; and considerably more space is found there than in the narrow and confined streets: these crowded thoroughfares teem with every species of filthy beggar of all nations, and even surpass Marseilles in the variety and grotesqueness of their appearance and costumes, as they swarm with the most motley population under heaven.

The grand old palaces of the ancient Knights of Malta are now converted into barracks and hotels; and, together with all the houses in the island, are built of white stone, which glares intolerably in this perpetual sunshine. On the Grand Piazza the band of the 68th was playing, when we arrived, one of the sweet airs of our distant land; around them a most picturesque crew were assembled, and the brilliant sunshine gave a lively effect to every object.

It is now the middle of October, and we find our clothes unbearably hot, so are obliged to substitute others of the lightest description; in fact the heat is so great, that we cold Englishmen are rendered nearly powerless.

The town and locality contain a population in proportion greater than that of England; the soil is chiefly conveyed hither from Sicily, and placed upon the barren rock, where the natives, with a great and laudable degree of industry and frugality, grow enough corn to last the island six months.

I have heard of the beauty of the Maltese women, but, in my idea, their slovenly and dirty appearance does not justify the assertion. Their eyes are, how-

ever, generally very fine, and peer at you through the peculiar hood they wear, which conceal their greasy and begrimed countenances.

There is no native aristocracy; the last Knight of Malta died three years ago, and was not much esteemed when he was alive.

Every one has heard, and travellers written, and yet there cannot be but a faint idea of the strength of the fortifications which render Valetta impregnable, but I feel in duty bound to state how I admired the extraordinary fastness of the forts and walls which crown their native rocks. Notwithstanding the intense glare and heat of noon, we started for Citta Vecchia; but we are Englishmen, and can stand anything. Our road wound between rows of white, glaring walls, which were insufferable to the eyes, along the scorching and stony tract, in which at this time of day, as the old proverb is, "none but mad dogs and Englishmen are to be seen." We, however, being of the latter class, and not like the Cockney at Venice, who was so tired of sight-seeing that he was quite glad when everything was shut up and there was nothing to be seen. So we determined to brave the temperature in search of the sublime;

which, however, was but indifferently explained to us by our cicerone, a Maltese, who ventured an observation, that "the prickly pear is the finest fruit that swims," and as he was an agreeable fellow we were sorry to disagree with him.

After passing through a series of magnificent marble arches and decayed fortifications, the first object of interest in this deserted city, once the capital of the island, is the cathedral, which is gorgeous in the extreme for the gildings, paintings, and altars. St. Paul's Cave, where he took refuge after his shipwreck, is situated at some little distance. A half-starved priest presented us severally with a lighted taper, as no daylight appears ever in the sanctum of the saint. A most beautiful statue of him stands hidden here, for the people are very superstitious, and would not remove this statue from his pedestal for fear the place should fall in. It seems, however, that St. Paul is the patron saint here, and consequently gets very hard work; for whenever any disease is prevalent, or a great storm takes place, he is pulled out, and carried through the streets, in order that his presence may appease the calamity. He is, in fact, referred to upon every

occasion; it is supposed he undertakes it for the honour of the thing, as he gets very little for his trouble.

We followed our priest to the interior of the catacombs, which, if the traveller has seen either those of Rome or Syracuse, the inspection of these barely repays his exertion. They consist merely of winding subterranean caverns, the sides perforated with the receptacles of the Saracen dead, whose remains have long since mouldered away.

The city is destitute of population, excepting a few miserable old men and filthy crones, with their hair worn away by neglect and dirt; and the long ears flapping against their sow-like faces, give them the appearance of animated Burmese idols. In the lonely precincts of the town, a fit place for forlorn females, is a nunnery; the doomed sisters are gazed at through a strong double grating, like beasts in a menagerie.

The gardens of Antonio are one of the few instances of vegetable and herbal existence. They are attached to the summer residence of the governor, and are really beautiful in the graceful mingling of the plants and trees, which are from all parts of the

world, and give great credit to the taste of the owner; an abundance of orange-trees, whose branches are bowed to the ground with the weight of their golden fruit, together with the extensive views from the terraces, statues, fountains, and arbours, must render it a delightful abode.

In Valetta, the church of San Giovanni ought not to be overlooked by lovers of architectural beauty. Upon entering at the principal door, the high altar blazing with magnificent pomp, the gaudy hangings, gilded roof, and the devout kneeling figures, casting their long shadows athwart the splendid floor (which is one vast escutcheon, and the tombs of the Knights of Malta, who lay side by side), burst upon you with awful splendour. There is a fine piece of sculpture, hewn from a solid block of marble, of John baptizing Christ. The tombs of La Valette, and others equally important in history, are here shown, together with the keys of the ancient city of Rhodes.

An hour's inspection of the armoury in the governor's palace does not fail to reward the attempt; it contains suits of armour and weapons of the earliest and latest periods—the arms and accoutrements of all the principal knights are here found—and contains

many trophies of war of every country. There is a study for connoisseurs in anatomy to be found at the Floriana convent, where there are shown fourteen preserved monks, smoked and dried by much the same process that orange-peel is candied: this custom of keeping above ground each successive superior of the convent is also carried out in many parts of Italy.

The heat still continues, and is rather increased by the hot sirocco wind that sweeps over the island at this time of year.

The whole of Malta may be seen in four days, not excepting the Nix Mangiare stairs,—a resort of all the filthiest and noisy vagabonds in the place. Two days ago a sailor, who found a difficulty in finding a method to spend his last thirty shillings before he joined his ship, hired from these stairs thirty boats, at one shilling a-piece; then tying them together in line quietly entered the last one, and was towed back to his ship, from whence he was observed sitting in a dignified posture, and mistaken by the uninitiated for the lord high admiral.

The steamer that is to bear us to Alexandria is

lying in the harbour, and so adieu to the joys of
La Valette.

Farewell till my next.

Yours for ever,

* * * * *

LETTER VI.

When the rising moon begins to climb,
When the stars twinkle through the loops of Time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air.

Earth may crumble back into earth ; the spirit will still
escape from its frail tenement. The wind of the storm may
scatter his ashes ; his being endures for ever.

Olden she was, but had been young ;
Virtuous she was, and had been, I believe.

BYRON.

MY DEAR — — —,

WE are again at the mercy of the waves,
steaming along those lonely seas, where no land ap-
pears for three days and nights. The ship is crowded
with passengers, chiefly on their way to India,—cadets,
missionaries, engineers, tourists, and young ladies in
search of husbands. I know not by what miraculous
agency they are all stowed away, but I am painfully

aware of my own situation in a cabin about the size of a sensible dog-kennel, with three companions beside myself; and what with the small allowance of air, and the strenuous exertions of the three gentlemen to keep one another awake, little sleep approaches. One person underneath me snores all night, and wakes up in fits and starts; another at my feet coughs all night; and the remaining agreeable gentleman pitches himself about like a porpoise, and enters into a dissertation, about 3 A.M., upon the rise and fall of the Roman Empire: when morning arrives, and sleep at last gradually begins through utter exhaustion to steal over the senses, they all three simultaneously leap up, and loudly demand the steward, who of course is nowhere to be found, and the floor is knee-deep in baggage and the bed-clothes of the restless gentlemen.

In the saloon, at breakfast, we recognized our old friend of the accordion and honeymoon; also the speculative young ladies, got up regardless of expense, and dressed for conquest; an elderly lady of a sentimental tendency, having giving up her amours takes to striking attitudes, and shaves her forehead to bring out the intellect. We also observed a re-

markable gentleman of easy manners, who seems conscious of his superiority; besides which he states he is a C. E. This individual evidently wishes the world to be led to suppose he is of some importance somewhere, as his confidential air of *insouciance* would lead one to suppose.

"My name is Bumble," said he, with a charming air of modest *empressement*; "you most probably have heard of me before?"

Now not wishing, either for the sake of Bumble or civility, to deviate so horribly from the path of moral rectitude as to state distinctly I *had*, my answer was quietly to the effect that I had not; which rather irritated my learned friend, who, nevertheless, soon resumed his usual condescending air when I told him that I had, unfortunately, never mixed much with *great men*.

Everything continued smoothly and no casualty of importance occurred, excepting that the unquiet personage in my cabin evinced a strong desire to ascertain the state of the weather: accordingly, to satisfy his curiosity, he unfortunately thrust his head too far through the bull's-eye window, so that he could not, without the aid of several stewards, get it back again.

Another day has dawned, and still the same wide desolation of waters; and until twelve o'clock on the second day after leaving Malta, no sail had appeared: the one that now dotted the horizon proved to be a Norwegian, and showed her colours as we passed.

Matrimony is the soul of happiness, or happiness is the soul of matrimony, I do not exactly know which; yet, whichever it may be, nobody in an unmarried state can possibly help pitying those engaged in it, when the timbrel of his ear is fearfully lacerated by those dire wailings of infants. The ship swarms with these unfortunate necessities of our nature, with their slipshod nurses, who keep up an incessant fire of that unintelligible language peculiarly employed for the baby's understanding. What a blessing it would be if the Company's directors could arrange a boat for the accommodation of all these specimens of humanity to be towed half a mile astern of the vessel! The band of the ship has just struck up a national air, the babies are beginning to crow, the nurses to murmur their unintelligible language, and the cattle, poultry, and other beasts of consumption, to bellow and cackle, making the most horrible din!

* * * * *

It is again night, and what a night! The golden

splendour of the day has gone, and all the lovely tints which chase one another across the sky in this ephemeral twilight are gone too; the moon shines clear and bright, so brightly that I am writing this by the light of her rays, whose magnificent column upon the sea reigns supreme over the tiny modest wakes of the stars. How large and gloriously those planets stand out from the serene ocean of heaven! No mockery of those that are soulless shall make me cease to adore thee, ye beautiful worlds! It is in moments like these that the mere sense of existence is an intense happiness! What a calm repose steals over the spirit, to chase away the clouds of sorrow and care from the aching brow! Surely it is a night for meditation,—and why not?

I was never one of those staid, matter-of-fact persons, who ridicule enthusiasm and care not for the beautiful, without the enjoyment of which life would to *me* be a burthen; yet I suppose those people *are* sensible of happiness, but are devoid utterly of those thrilling emotions that are influenced by the sublime field of this fair creation. *Romantic enthusiasm of youth* is constantly thrown in my teeth, when involuntarily my spirit utters an exclamation of

delight at the wild buffeting of the waves or the dying glory of the day; but those who really possess a keen sense and appreciation of the beauties and poetry of Nature, and everything that is good in existence, cannot easily allow their minds to be chilled by the scoffings of these cold-natured people, who would do better to look after their own worldly affairs, and not attempt to hasten the pangs of care in others, for too soon will they rise on the horizon of life.*

For what were we born, if 'twere not to worship and adore the Good and the Beautiful? Have *you* never at times chanced to pause and scan the dark ocean, trembling in the quiet moon-rays—when the forest bird has forgotten his sweetest tune in the calmness of the night, and eternity is bathed in the halo of the starbeams? and then, perchance, dream to what realm of the far skies the Spirit may soar to worship at the altar of the Infinite, when the clay shall have mingled with earth; and so feel the intellect dismayed, yet exalted, by visionary glories of the Ideal, and the mysteries of the unfathomable worlds which

* The author ventures to hope that egotism may be pardoned in a *private letter to a friend*.

invite the Spirit to wander through the trackless regions of the Imagination.

But pardon me, my dear friend, for this digression, and so to continue.

* * * * *

Another day and night, and still the same unbroken circle of waters! We have, however, been enlivened by moonlight dancing on deck. I myself enjoyed the dancing propensities of a middle-aged lady with a brown face, very like a Buffalo girl dancing in the light of her native moon. Fancy thirty or forty individuals kicking about on a small spot in the midst of the wide ocean, one hundred miles from any land! A Padre, who is on deck, crosses himself at every whack of the big drum, deeming it profane to suppose that Terpsichore ever took a voyage from Malta to Alexandria; but down below, at *dinner*, he is a changed man,—it is perfectly horrible to see a holy father gormandise to such a degree.

During the progress of the entertainment we have ample opportunity of observing human nature in its various phases. Here is an elderly gentleman of a benign countenance, undertaking seemingly a species

of Indian war-dance with a little girl, who has engaged him for the polka. In the course of this exhibition they stumble over two gentlemen of majestic aspect, who consider it beneath them to join the festive throng. One of them has on his head an invention for keeping off the rays of the moon, in shape like the helmet of an ancient warrior; as he now stands he might be mistaken for Mars in anger.

It was well said, that the sublime and the ridiculous were generally mingled together, for the eyes, after quitting this last magnificent spectacle, rested upon a negro woman squatted down, who informed the company, "me hab no picaninny:" so, to console her for this lamented detriment to her domestic bliss, she contented herself in a substitute, by suckling a small terrier. Mr. Bumble's authority was referred to, and being also a professor of hydraulics, he insisted it was the custom of her country.

This was our last night on board, and at eight o'clock on the morning of the 19th of October the low land of Egypt rose from the wave.

But I must cease for the present.

Sincerely yours,

* * * * *

LETTER VII.

Fill'd with the face of heav'n, which from afar,
Comes down upon the waters ; all its hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star,
Their magical variety diffuse :
And now they change,—a paler shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains ; parting day
Dies like the dolphin : whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away ;
The last still loveliest, till —'tis gone—and all is grey.

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burned on the waters ; the poop was beaten gold.

ALEXANDRIA, the once great seat of learning,
the retreat of the Epicurean and the dwelling-place of
Cleopatra, with her Roman conquerors, is far from
realizing the splendid ideas that rise from studying the
history of its grandest eras ; it is now certainly a most
important seaport of the East, yet where are now its
halls of science, the gilded barges that languidly bore

the Sybarite from Lake Maræotis to his marble porticoes on its banks? Where are now its gorgeously crowded thoroughfares and monuments? But two of the latter remain, tall and solemn in their loneliness,* like the ghosts of departed greatness mourning for the past magnificence that once rolled around them; and over the graves of the Hall of seven hundred thousand volumes, and four thousand palaces, a paltry medley of buildings and mud huts are all that stand for their tombstones. Such is Alexandria!

As we approached, the harbour yawned to receive us, gay with the flags of all nations. • We dropped anchor, and were instantly overwhelmed by a shrieking rabble of filthy Arabs, of every hue in niggerdom, whose chief occupation was scratching themselves and picking pockets. But upon landing,—oh ye gods! what a sight for a Pharaoh and a father! A fresh gang awaited us, and a general engagement took place in defence of our cloaks and carpet-bags.

The tide of war was luckily changed in our favour by the appearance of a ferocious dragoman, who immediately commenced knocking them down like skittles; in the mean time we took refuge in a thing upon

* Pompey's Pillar, and Cleopatra's Needle.

wheels, in courtesy termed an omnibus, and were jolted to the Hôtel d'Orient, and at the same time out of the fryingpan into the fire,—a fresh reserve of fifteen or more boys and donkeys attacked us on all sides for some time. In vain we consulted our military tactics, till the *ruse* of the Horatii (thanks to Mr. Keightley) was attempted: we fled—we returned—and six sprawled in the dust—“*Virtus in actione consistit.*”

It is curious how little the manners and customs of the Egyptians are altered from their original and pristine state. Everything that is portrayed in the Scriptures passes before the eyes in startling reality; the women, with their loose tunics wrapped around them, their pitchers on their heads, conversing at the well-side with groups of men in their turbans and long robes; the aged and infirm are reclining, their staffs at their side, while the young ones give them to drink; and in all the walks without the city, in the square flat-roofed houses, surrounded with the date-palm, which form avenues and line the road which traverses the dry and barren soil; the camels being laden with water at the wells; all recall vividly crowds of Scriptural incidents, that one might almost imagine our

Saviour surrounded by his disciples, and followed by an imploring crowd.

The original design for the erection of Cleopatra's Needle, which is a little way from the town, is so confused in numerous different accounts and conjectures that it is impossible to arrive at the truth, which is long lost in the myth of time. It is beautifully upright and perfect, considering its immense age; it stands beside its fallen companion of years, which they say is speedily to be removed to England. The fine column of Pompey's Pillar is equal in importance, standing on the brow of an eminence, alone in its grandeur: this, however, is somewhat defaced by time and Englishmen's names; it is attributed to have been erected in honour of Diocletian's victories.

The Pacha's palace is nearly the only other object of interest, which, with the exception of one splendid circular hall and some inlaid ebon flooring, does not exceed in grandeur many of the houses of our aristocracy: from the balcony there is a view of the harbour, with the Pacha's yacht lying at anchor.

Our next care was to inspect the boat that is to bear us to Thebes. We were delighted at the accommodation, where there is every comfort that is found

in an English gentleman's yacht. It is well known to be the finest on the river; it is about sixty feet in length: the Arab sailors occupy the foredeck; we, of course, occupy the quarter-deck, which forms the roof of our cabin, divided into three compartments, the dining-room, saloon, and sleeping apartment, and are wide and spacious. Its long latteen spar tapers upwards into a slender point, on which flutters our private flag, surmounted by the red ensign of England.

The climate here is insufferably hot till after sunset, which day after day is gorgeous in the extreme: the air then becomes deliciously mild and salubrious. None but those who have witnessed an Egyptian sunset can possibly form the faintest idea of the peculiar beauty of the tender violet hue, which glimmering upwards spreads half across the sky, and then gradually changes, and melts into the most delicate pink, increasing downwards in brightness towards the horizon, which is bathed in a flood of golden light.

It is astonishing the quantity of dogs that prowl through the town, and still more so that they do not go mad; wherever you go, a parcel of yelping curs are at your heels.

At night every half-hour is marked by the most

extraordinary proceedings on the part of the Arabs: one begins the concert by a long and protracted howl; he is immediately answered from the other end of the street by about twenty others, who all join in chorus, in one long dismal yell: the second part then opens; a dog barks, and the next moment a whole pack commence setting up the most direful howlings, which generally last till the end of the half-hour, when the Arabs begin again, and so on during the whole night. It is difficult to say what it all means: one thing is quite certain, that we are deprived of our natural amount of repose. At given periods these slumber-worriers parade the streets, preceded by the whole herd of dogs, and frequently stray jackasses join them, and all yell, bark, and bray together. We have since learned that it is the night-watch, and a capital look-out they keep, whose business it is to clear the streets of all stragglers after a certain hour. We are told they frequently have a *capital run* after any unfortunate gentleman that may be unaware of this curious custom.

On the 24th of October we embarked on board our Nile boat, where our dragoman and a plentiful supply of niggers, provisions, and every luxury we could wish

for, awaited us; the flag of England flew up the mast, and a few minutes saw us in our water home gliding up the Mahmoudieh canal, which consists of a fine, broad, muddy stream, flowing between low flat banks: beyond that, upon our right, spread the gloomy lakes of Meîédee and Maræotis,—not a single sail dotted their mournful surface. They continue with us till we arrive at Atfeh (the junction with the Nile).

This village, the first object of any interest that we had arrived at since we had embarked, consists of a dirty collection of miserable mud-huts, piled in heaps one on another; the whole place is filled with dust and dogs; and the holes for admitting the air into these filthy dwellings give it the appearance of an enormous rabbit-warren. We waited here till the gates of the lock were opened, whilst during the delay the whole population came teeming and yelling like demons to the water's edge, and greeted us with various pantomimic gestures and grimaces, not forgetting to scream for *backsheesh*,* the first Arabic word a traveller will learn, and great care is taken that he shall not forget it. Here the canal terminates, and as the

* Presents.

ponderous gates of the lock groaned and yawned we slid smoothly into the Nile.

At last we are fairly upon the bosom of the sacred river, which every infant lisps,—the river that bore the cradle of Moses and the gilded barge of Cleopatra, which washed the land of bondage of the children of Israel, and was crimsoned by the victory of Nelson, and now glittered in the sun, flowing as fast and bright as when its waves swept past Memphis. At first no wind favoured us, and we were obliged to stem the rapid stream by the aid of our crew, who seemed insensible to fatigue, and towed us one whole night and half the next day, cheering themselves on by their perpetual chorus of "*Aya Esa Heylessa*,"—God help us! This monotonous chant unceasingly accompanies all their labours.

The first time they were at rest we were enlightened by an Arab concert: a very original-looking drum, consisting of a sheet of parchment spread across the mouth of a clay bowl, is played by the fingers, while the remainder howl and clap their hands, which is the highest perfection that music has arrived at in Egypt.

After this the performances concluded by the

process of curing one of the crew who had received a *coup de soleil*. The man is stripped of his scanty rags, the professor of medicine then commences biting the nose and pulling the ears of the sufferer out of joint; he then rubs and grooms him with salt and water, which he also pours into his ears till it comes out of his eyes, nose, and mouth; he then concludes the operation by a whack on the side of his head, and the unhappy man then believes himself well.

There is scarcely anything to interest the traveller between Atfeh and Cairo; a few white tombs, and solitary mosques shaded by the attendant palm-tree, and some dirty mud villages, are all that grace the low flat banks. The Arabs of the Nile know as much about sailing as they do of the time when the Nelson Column is to be finished, or when Mr. James's novels are to cease, consequently we have been run into by two cargo boats and nearly swamped. Thanks to the new paint, we have as yet had but a fair allowance of flies and other insect nuisances, yet the mosquitoes, having strong constitutions, still remain,—horrible aggravators of human nature, fit to make a parson swear! It is heart-rending to observe how a human being can be metamorphosed in a single night. By

Venus! it would be a fine cure for love, when in the morning the innamorata's countenance resembles a magnified nutmeg-grater; I am not quite sure Aristotle does not mention it. But enough, "*revenons a nos moutons.*"

LETTER VIII.

Majestic Spirit of the Past, I recognise thee ! Thou hast bid the shadow go back for me upon the dial-plate of Time. Thou hast taught me to read in thee the present and the future—a revelation of man's destiny on earth ! Generations perish, like the leaves of the forest, passing away when their mission is completed. O glorious thought ! that lifts me above the power of time and chance, and tells me I cannot pass away, and leave no mark of my existence.

LONGFELLOW.

— — —,

It is within this ancient and historic land that one recognises vividly the universal system of *Mutation*, — a system that traverses the farthest and brightest planets in the blue eternity ; which changes the conditions of dynasties, empires, and nations ; in which all nature, in its turn, sees the Dismal and the Bright, and Humanity its prosperities and reverses ; and like the glowing flame, which is reduced to ashes

and dust, so alike before its potent sway youth shrinks into old age and the dust of the grave. Think on the glorious Past which once shed its halo around this now degraded people, whose dwellings are of the slime of their river, shared alike by the wild dogs and vermin which cover them. Wander back to those dim eras, when great Remeses conquered, and the Pharaohs swayed, a world, spreading the effulgence of their golden rule from their thrones of mighty Thebes and priestly Memphis. Where are now all these? The outcast Arab and the jackal prowl among the halls of those palaces, and beasts of prey seek refuge among the tombs of those splendid monarchs, who sleep amidst the decay of their greatness, eternally erased from the living catalogue of the world, yet still glowing brightly from the everlasting pages of Fame and Time.

Look on that picture, and on this. Contemplate the melancholy and dejection that reign throughout those wretched hovels, rising from mounds of rubbish and filth, the neglected *débris* of successive inundations, filled with troops of noisy beggars, whose loathsome bodies and neglected sores attract the swarming flies and vermin. And also in the midst

of the largest towns innumerable instances of squalid wretchedness and disease offend the eye; together with the crowds of filthy, naked children, their decaying eyes ringed with flies, which remain unmoved from their faces, mingling with the population, the generality of which seem nearly in the same station in life,—all are pretty nearly equal. The flies soon left the paint and came to us, and they surely are one of the ten plagues not yet extinct. In vain we attempt to read, draw, or any other occupation; for, in spite of our frantic and incessant efforts to resist them with a switch, they still obstinately swarm and promenade our faces. We begin to find them the bane of our existence.

Again, during the next night we were disturbed in our slumbers by a dreadful crash, which shivered our timbers, so that we momentarily expected to go down; but upon arriving on deck found it, as usual, only the excessive humour of the crew, who had run down a boat, and seemed more *amusing* to them than *agreeable* to us.

Soon afterwards daylight appeared, and rising from the cloudless horizon of an Orient morn, the sight that has charmed every one from Cheops to

ourselves, whose patriarchal grandeur rises from out the grave of countless ages, appeared, in the mighty shapes of the *Pyramids of Egypt*. For some time my eyes were fixed upon them, and now I felt I was *really* in Egypt; gradually they wheeled round with the course of the boat, and soon afterwards the glittering panorama of Grand Cairo, with its fairy-like forest of minarets, rolled into view.

There is, perhaps, no town in the world so imposing in appearance at first sight than Cairo; its palaces, domes, and minarets, rest upon a natural elevation of land, gradually rising from the river, and receding towards the high range of Mokatta Mountains. And from the citadel which crowns the height, looking like a monarch with his empire at his feet, the picturesque honeycombed houses of trellis-work stretch in long, irregular, undulating lines and terraces, on either side, till they mingle with the port of Boulac, which, with its manufactories and docks, lines the water's edge. We came to anchor not far from the Pasha's steam-yacht, built for him at Glasgow, and to all appearance seems to be made of solid gold.

The approach to Sheppard's Hotel is chiefly

through one broad avenue of acacias, the fashionable lounge of the populace, and of course swarms with every variety,—merchants, Franks, donkey-boys, and soldiers. A party of the latter passed us, guarding some wretched-looking, downcast Arabs, who were handcuffed with enormous shackles. These a few days ago were free men; they have been surrounded, captured, and torn from their native homes, to be forced into the service of the Pasha. This state of things is such that almost half the male population you meet in Egypt have but one eye, as they put them out in order to escape being forced into his army or other odious thralldom. There are even professional men who poison the eye, or sew it up, and also sometimes otherwise maim their customers, at a small price.

Mehemet Ali, once hearing of this practice among the Arabs, established a *one-eye corps* in his army; so the poor wretches were obliged to maim themselves in other ways to baffle the tyrant, to serve whom they were hunted and captured, and their homes and families left to starve in desolation. Such is the state of affairs at the present day.

Here we have a *hareem* out for exercise, looking

like moving bundles of rags, their bright, dark eyes being the only part that denotes humanity, excepting perhaps the shapes of their legs, which stand out in bold relief when the wind catches them, as they ride after the manner of their lords. Every person of good breeding and morals studiously avoids their gaze as they pass,—so what an advantage it must be to squint!

I must apologise for not giving a further description of Cairo, as I was here attacked by indisposition, and beg for your patience till my return.

We, nevertheless, proceeded in a few days upon the broad river, and as the city of Victory receded,* we could not help observing (begging Romance's pardon) how closely its domes and minarets resembled huge candlesticks and stupendous pepper-boxes. The banks still retained the same monotonous character as at first, in their flat banks, mud villages, and palms; the broad, glaring plain of the Libyan desert accompanied us till we arrived at Minyeh, a small town famous for its fruit-gardens and a house *they* call a palace.

It cannot evidently (as far as I can judge at

* El-Kahira (Cairo).

present) be for the sake of scenic beauty that people emigrate to the Nile; the absence of which, however, in my case is compensated by the climate, the extreme luxury of our own boat, and the society of my three friends, with every wish that man can desire at our command. We generally rise with the sun, and earn a good appetite and breakfast by a stroll with our guns on the banks, where we generally slaughter hawks, hoopoes, turtle-doves, eagles, and unknown birds. The heat during the day is generally 95° in the sun, rendering it at first difficult to emerge from the cabin, though, nevertheless, a cool breeze passes through the blinds, wafting away the clouds of fragrant gebelli; inhaling which, together with the tiny cup of the essence of coffee, forms a most charming occupation as we lazily recline on our carpets and divans. We read, lounge, and are happy in the *dolce far niente*. We are sometimes compelled to roll upon deck for a moment, to listen to the *dragoman's* account of some holes in a rock that Abraham passed by in a ferry-boat, and other absurdities, to attempt the usual shots at a crocodile, who of course takes no other notice than quietly walking into the water.

I say we are lazy now; it is principally because

it is customary and more convenient to lionise the caverns, tombs, and antiquities, on the *return* down the river.

The inhabitants of these wilds seem also to be well aware of the nature of *backsheesh*, for from a convent situated on a rock, and entered by subterranean passages, issued a swarm of the naked monks, who swam with the boat for nearly two miles. I believe the dragoman, when he considered they had had enough exercise, tossed them some paras (small copper coins).

After passing Minyeh the bold and rocky features of the desert appeared; huge isolated masses of rock, seemingly split asunder by some awful and sudden convulsion, cast their long shadows upon the burning sand, whilst, half-buried in the dust of ages, the once sacred remains of a solitary temple may be seen, wedged in a cleft of the rock, surrounded by a few scattered tombs of a neighbouring village: nothing more awfully mournful can be conceived than these last desolate homes of the children of the desert.

About eight o'clock one evening we ran aground, high and dry, upon a sand-bank near Manfaloot, going at the time six knots an hour. This was immense excitement, as all the negroes from the

surrounding district came the next morning to haul us off, one of the crew also being bastinadoed for sleeping on his watch : this punishment was not, as I had been led to suppose, inflicted upon his feet, but upon the spot particularly selected by the British schoolmaster of the present day. The management of the boat and all these public affairs is intrusted to a sort of superior gentleman, who calls himself the Rais, and is never known to laugh.

In a few hours we anchored off the town of Osioot, the capital of Upper Egypt. Here we received on board a fresh importation of flies, cockroaches, and reptiles, who of course commenced slowly trailing over our countenances during our slumbers, which are also harassed by the most cunning and obstinate of mosquitoes of enormous size, who wait till they see us lift the curtains and then rush into the bed after us, braying all night like jackasses. Sometimes you may encounter crawling animals of rather *graceful* appearance, for upon awaking one morning I found one of these creatures, with a head like a greyhound and terminating in a fish-like tail, sitting quietly on my chest, staring me straight in the face !

Osioot boasts only of an ancient Roman bath ;

whilst in the neighbourhood are some tombs and caverns, to be inspected on our return.

Osiot soon was far behind, and the same shooting excursions and easy course of life continue; we dine at four, and generally retire early after our pipes and coffee, which we talk over upon the quarter-deck. These fair Egyptian evenings are so mild and delicious there is scarcely any twilight, for as soon as the last tints of the repeatedly gorgeous sunset have faded away, night draws on; and then how bright and glorious the unnumbered systems of suns, and planets, earths, and their moons, stand out in the most brilliant confusion!

We continued our course with the most delightful sailing, dashing through the water, gunwale under, below the noble crags of "Gebel Sheik Heredee," at a tremendous pace. About here the scenery becomes more particularly striking, in the huge masses of rock which tower above us in all their barren magnificence. It is said that amongst the caves which perforate them St. Athanasius took refuge from his persecutors, with many of the fugitive Christians. These rocks line only the left bank the whole way up; the other being perfectly flat, bordered with luxurious crops of Indian

corn, and other vegetation, which, however, extends but a short distance from the banks, and then all is desert.

At each village we pass, the same filth and extreme poverty exist; the women's only covering is the universal loose blue frock, which during the gusts of wind tends to show the sometimes beautiful and graceful form of their bodies: yet, though they consider it the essence of virtue to conceal their *faces*, they seldom think of hiding the remainder of their persons. Their beauty is extremely short-lived, as from the age of sixteen to nineteen a well-moulded face may be met with, for generally the hard labour they endure under the burning sun soon withers their youth and furrows their cheeks, till they are absolutely reduced, apparently, to hideous crones: yet their manner of clothing must conveniently entail little time or trouble in disembarassing themselves of it. This, however, was considered a luxury by a certain elderly lady in England, who said it was impious to waste God's precious moments upon vain adornment of person, and who followed up her notion faithfully in arranging, by a curious piece of mechanism, that one string should support the whole of her apparel in its

proper place; so upon retiring to rest she had simply to undo the *one knot* and the garments peeled off, falling in a ring on the floor at the side of her bed, and in the morning she stepped from her couch into the ring, pulled it up, tied the knot, shook herself, and was perfect again! * * *

On the evening of the next day a fresh breeze sprang up; the moonlit sky was cloudless; the broad bosom of the Nile was one sheet of foam; and as we passed the rugged cliffs near Girgeh, frowning in dark grandeur against the clear purple of the sky, the wind increased,—strong, fitful gusts, swept around the black precipices, and moaned in their caverns, rendering the utmost strength and vigilance of the crew necessary for preventing the capsizing of our gallant bark, as it may be observed these Nile boats seldom draw more than two feet of water, and are nearly flat-bottomed; and besides which we left considerable ballast on shore when hauled off Manfaloot sand-bank. Notwithstanding it was delightful to tear through the water by those dark heights, underneath the star-bedropped heavens, glowing with the same brilliant lustre that they shed over the old plains of Chaldea and their shepherd worshippers in

the early ages of the infant world. How marvelled they then, standing in wonder and awe gazing on those orbs! Ages have rolled on, yet still men wonder and conjecture their mighty secrets. Oh! ye brilliant worlds, empearling the forehead of the skies, why may not man penetrate thy far mysteries, and learn if between thy poles there exist hearts as rugged as war and hate, in this dark economy of fallen earth; or if there be bosoms as tender that glow in love's beaming smile, living in blissful harmony and unison of heart, in thy bright everlasting realms of joy and peace, and yet (if there be such, in those distant seas of space) who must look down from their bright rolling globes upon the far, faintly-sparkling world of Fallen Earth, and wonder that the abode and birth-place of sin and darkness be not struck from its orbit and whirled to eternal doom!

* * * *

During the night we pass Girgeh, boasting of no antiquities, and supposed originally to have been of Christian origin. The next day was warm and fair, and we glided onwards between palm-shaded villages, luxuriant crops of Indian corn, and barren rocks,

before a gentle breeze, which continued till we reached the rocks and sand-banks of Zereed Brahim Pasha.

If the traveller can sufficiently rouse himself from the lassitude produced by a capital dinner, pipes and coffee, to get into his small boat, with his gun, and row towards the aforesaid rocks and banks, he will be rewarded, not perhaps by much success, on account of distance and darkness, but upon firing his piece stupendous flocks of geese, pelicans, storks, and every species of wild bird, from all the crannies of the rocks, will arise in clouds on every side, perfectly darkening the moonlit air. One of my friends had the good fortune of shooting a fine pelican; they abound here in thousands: at night some parts of the banks are lined with them, appearing like long streaks of light.

We next pass Keneh, a small but dissolute town, abounding in barley and dancing-girls. We were here becalmed, and were towed for two whole days by our indefatigable crew into Luxor.

LETTER IX.

People that travel through thy wasted land
Gaze on thy ruins, and amazed stand ;
They shake their spleenful heads, disdain, deride
The awful downfall of so fair a pride.
Her torments give their empty lips new matter,
And with their scornful fingers point they at her :
Is this (say they) that place, whose wonted fame
Made troubled earth to tremble at her name ?
Is this that state ? Are these those goodly stations ?
Is this that mistress, and that queen of nations ?

QUARLES.

Mangez-vous bien, Monsieur ?
Oui, et bois encore mieux.

MONS. DE PORCEAUGNAC.

Yes, Love indeed is light from heaven ;
A spark of that immortal fire
With angels shared, by Alla given,
To lift from earth our low desire.

Sweet day, so warm—so calm—so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night ;
For thou must die.

HERBERT.

— — —,

It was seven in the morning of the 19th of
November that, with the aid of a telescope, we could

plainly perceive the Tombs of the Kings, which honeycomb the heart of the mountain that had appeared in the distance the night before, and overlooks the plain of Thebes. The approach to the ruined waste is very fine, yet it is invested by a sort of melancholy grandeur, far-strewn with those broken memorials of bygone power. As our boat moved slowly up the stream, the whole Field of Ruin unrolled itself before us, gradually displaying its distant clusters of temples and obelisks, while in the far distance loomed the two Colossi, standing in lone companionship—the rough giants of the waste.

It is useless here to add *my* feeble attempts to describe the history of Thebes and its golden eras to the numbers which have arisen from the most eloquent of pens, but shall content myself by giving upon my return an account of my own individual wanderings on these plains of the dead.

On approaching Louqsor,* the general harbour for the Nile boat, we were saluted rather feebly by a seedy double-barrel from an English boat at anchor, which we returned by twenty rounds from all our

* Also called Luxor—a village on the boundaries of the plain of Thebes.



The Colossi of the Plain.

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guns and pistols, and hoisting our private flag, were soon at anchor opposite the old Temple of Luxor. In the course of the day we were honoured by a visit from the proprietor of the seedy double-barrel, a Mr. T——, a most talkative person, who, besides being a little deaf, had a knack of not quite comprehending a joke till about four minutes after it it had been delivered.

Upon the present occasion, one of my friends, during the conversation, alluded to the recent melancholy decease of his great aunt of fever in Egypt. Immediately Mr. T—— (who, for the last few minutes, had become rather absent), endeavouring to grasp a *past anecdote*, exclaimed with sudden animation, "Ha, ha! d——d good fellow! capital fun!" My friend, at first, was a little shocked and confused at such an allusion to his departed relative, but, happily, all was soon arranged.

I could not help being particularly struck by the forcible method of argument employed by Mr. T——, during one of his illustrative fits of conversation, to prove that humanity were *modified cannibals*. "For instance," said he, "your grandmother dies and is buried—the peculiar gases arising from

her remains cause the flowers and grass to grow and flourish on her grave; sheep eat the *grass*—*you* eat the sheep! *Ergo*, it naturally follows—you must have swallowed certain particles of your deceased relation.

This gentleman's departure gave place to a visit from the English consul, though we endeavoured in vain to find out what was *English* about him, as his face was as black as a hat; yet he was a most agreeable person.

I have forgotten to mention Mr. T——'s lively disposition, as the night after our arrival, being Sunday, this gentleman let off a quantity of fireworks, and hired all the dancing-girls of Thebes, to amuse his wife and daughter. The exhibitions of these young ladies, besides being far from moral, made such a dreadful noise till two A.M. that sleep was impossible. We were informed that the crew of Mr. T——'s boat and their female acquaintances that night consumed one hundred and twenty-five bottles of liquor during the entertainment, and consequently retired in an unwonted state of hilarity.

The next evening we were favoured by Ibrahim Bey and suite's company at dinner; he is nephew to the late Mehemet Ali, and Inspector-general of Cavalry, so great attention was paid him. He is a person of

enormous circumference, devouring everything at table within his reach. His own private *menu* amounted to "soup, mutton, a couple of fowls (which, in his Arab manners, he tore with his hands and teeth), one rice pudding, one bottle of light claret, one bottle of beer, pancakes, jam, and one bottle of Bordeaux;" and finished in splendid style with a whole melon, figs, a bottle of best pickles, coffee, and the greater part of a bottle of brandy! All of which were alike thrown down his capacious maw! besides other tit-bits, which his aide-de-camp offered him with his fingers. He scarcely ventured to make an observation during his feast, excepting between each luscious mouthful he continually exclaimed, in tones of surprise and content, "Olla! olla! olla!" while the moisture dribbled from the corners of his mouth, which was not unlike a post-office.

The next day we started amidst the salutes of the consul and whole harbour, having taken on board a cargo of monkeys, which amused us very much.

Above Thebes, the country, though still bounded and enclosed by the stern and barren wildness of the desert mountains, improves very much in picturesqueness of appearance; brilliantly green trees and shrubs springing from fresh and verdant banks, con-

trasting with the scorching sand beyond. We passed the ruined city of El Kab, which outstrips in the race of time even royal Thebes itself; also Edfou, from the centre of which pile of huts rise the grand propylon and courts of its temple. A steady breeze having sprung up, we were borne swiftly on our course towards Assouan.

The next day we passed a boat containing a couple of old English gentlemen, who were returning from a long cruise up the river with their wives, and a large supply of cockroaches. We liberally saluted them, but they answered us with only a single-barrel belonging to the cook. The next morning the steerer, tired as we supposed of his occupation, without any warning took himself off into the Desert, with only the shirt on his back, and six hundred miles from his home.

During the afternoon we passed the extensive quarries of Gebel el Silsilis, from which the Pharaohs extracted the stone with which they reared their cities and temples. Here may be observed, *fresh* as if cut yesterday, the marks of the levers which split the stone that probably built Thebes and Memphis; the *origin* of these cities alone having been long shrouded in the mists of antiquity. Towards evening the wind, having lately dropped, again freshened into a delightful breeze.

The next morning our crew amused themselves with a pantomimical representation of the manners and customs of the East. One of them having fastened an old sheepskin on his head, imagined himself the Sultan, and bastinadoed the rest; during which time, to please them, we made frantic endeavours to laugh, which, I fear, only ended in ghastly grins and dreadful contortion of countenance.

I may as well mention the *sobriquets* of our crew, which are somewhat unique and various. They were as follows:—"Black Poll," "Wifeless Jim" (having left his better-half behind), "Mr. Gratwick," "Fanny" (from the clean proportions of his legs), "The Nubian Slasher" or the "Ugly Bay-Colt," "Bow-legged Ben," "Squinting Dick," "The Gamekeeper," "Sulky Peter," "One-eyed Nick," "Brown Bill," the "Recruit" (having joined us only at Cairo), "Long Joe," and "Blue Bob" (the latter from the cerulean tinge noticeable upon his skin).

One evening I discovered poor Jim in tears over a letter, which they told me he was writing to his absent *sposa*. Now I remember hearing once that the youth of Egypt and the East told of their love something in the following manner:—

“To thee, Zayda—rose of my heart—light of my being—I write, ere gentle Sleep satisfies the yearnings of my spirit to be with thee in my dreams; when mild Oblivion—sweet mockery of Death, wraps the clay, and my soul, freed for a time from its prison, shall sail forth exulting on the waves of space, to meet and mingle with thine. Even while I write I see thee in the light of a spirit which has wandered hither to teach me to love thee more and more, with all the ardour of a faithful heart. Hist! methinks I hear a sigh. No!—’tis only that in every faint sound of the night I distinguish ‘Zayda.’ In the evening wind, sweeping across the desert plains, I hear the sweet burden of the name, wafted towards me, seemingly, by the voices of the angels which I pray Allah to keep watch over thee. Farewell, and forget not thine

ACHMET.”

It *may* or *may not* be their strain of expression, but upon overlooking the shoulder of the young gentleman the following was all that met my eye:—

كنك رائف تون رث استف طد هسمع هنر
 بجانب اقبب نطسبب جكج هدى لـك
 هشحسبح "نخ حشحك لـجنيخ جعيتي لقولـه

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Onwards! onwards! Brighter suns warm us, and starrier skies shed down their silver waves of light—desert, rock, and grove, flit by before the influence of a fair breeze, like the phantoms of a dream, as it wafts us nearer and nearer to our goal. At seven o'clock on the morning of the 1st of December we reached Assouan. Here we anchor, pause, and consider. We are now about 3600 miles from Old England, surrounded by the gigantic, precipitous rocks, of the *Souan* of the Copts,* and the *Siene* of Scripture. "Thus saith the Lord, they that uphold Egypt shall fall; and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Siene shall they fall in it by the sword." (Ezekiel, xxx. 6.) And truly is this prophecy fulfilled, for nothing is more awfully desolate and mournful in the whole of fallen Egypt: dark and bare rocks, embattled with Saracenic ruin, tower around, seemingly to enclose this forlorn city in one mighty sepulchre.

The modern *town*, if such it can be called, consists of the usual collection of mud huts, built upon the more solid remains of Roman civilisation; for even

* A race of people distinct from the Arabs, claiming descent from the "Shepherd Kings."

here the eye rests upon the broken piers and proudly mouldering arches of a people great and warlike, who once spread their power and the fear of their dominion through the earth, from *our* fair Western Isle even to "far Siene," whose tower still crests a beetling crag, scanning far over the desert hills, and over the broad stream that refreshes the twin-sister lands of Egypt and Ethiopia. It was to Siene that Juvenal was banished by the Emperor Domitian.

As we wended our way towards the temples of Philæ, through the vast heaps of rocks and granite that strew the Desert, and the fallen pile of the dead city, whose silent walls and deserted mosques topple over the graves of their inhabitants who have long slept around them, the sun fell on our devoted heads in a sort of battery of heat, so that we were glad to wrap handkerchiefs, sashes, and saddle-cloths—in fact, anything we could get—round our tarbooshes and wide-awakes, which we hardly *then* found sun-proof. After two hours of intensely yellow glare, our wearied eyes drank the first deep and delicious draught of the bright green foliage that dipped in the cool flow of the river: only those that have tried it (though our probation has been comparatively short—though, for

my part, quite sufficient) can know how great is the relief of water, so clear and cool, sparkling through the leafy apertures of shrubs, trees, and palms, of the freshest green, after hours of incessant, monotonous glare, of burning sands and rock! But, still, what a heavenly climate! Oh, let those in the sad embraces of decline, shun the cruel breath of a northern December; come away to the Nile, come where winter and its blasts are unknown, and calmness will be with them, contentment within, and sunshine without!

* * * *

We embarked in a crazy-looking craft (which was lying on the river), with every insect in natural history on board, and were soon whirling in the boiling waters and eddies of a cataract, formed by the numberless rocks which oppose the approach to Philæ. Immediately on having passed a lofty projection of huge loose bowlders of rock, which seem as if the slightest breath would hurl to the giddy depths below, the columns, pylon, and colonnades of a superb temple, springing from the sloping banks of a beautiful island, clothed in the most brilliant verdure and variety of foliage, burst upon us. This

was Philœ: grand in its sacred simplicity, quiet and secluded amidst the desolation around. The commencement of these courts of ancient worship is attributed to Ptolemy Philadelphus, and finished by succeeding monarchs, dedicated to the favourite deities of the ancient Egyptians—Osiris, Isis, and Thor. Its walls are covered with hieroglyphics, which are very perfect descriptions of whole wars, conquests, and governments, deeply cut in this everlasting stone. On one side may be seen a conquering hero of enormous dimensions, about to cut off the heads of fifty captives, all of whom he is holding with apparent ease in his left hand by the hair of their heads. Near this magnificent person some warriors are discovered (intended to be the conquering party, on account of their great height), who are besieging a tower, and walking with perfect indifference under enormous masses of rock, which the defenders are hurling upon them.

The day was glorious; bright, beautiful insects, of every colour, darted like flashes of light through the still and perfumed air; a ruined terrace, shaded by green and waving acacias and the *doum* palm,* which

* The *doum* palm differs slightly from the common palm-tree of Egypt.

cast their graceful shadows over the gliding stream, supported the remains of a beautiful sanctuary, whose columns and elegant balustrades overlooked the river, and was a spot in the whole sacred island which afforded the most serene resting-place; and here, whilst reclining on a fallen pillar, and fanned by soft and scented breezes murmuring through the foliage which sheltered me from the noonday heat, I cast my eyes upwards, and was preparing myself for reveries of what might have been the past history of this quiet isle and its sacred edifices, when large, black, and distinct, over the grand entrance to the hall, my eyes encountered the magniloquent name of "John Brown, Liverpool, 1849." Whether this person built or adorned the temple history does not state, though the date is a little modern for a ruin in this climate.

I was soon called away by my companions from my calm retreat, and slowly and lingeringly withdrew from this enchanting solitary isle. We landed again on the mainland, on a spot overlooking the First Cataract, which, beyond being a slight yet rapid cascade extending across the river, has nothing remarkable in it. Not far from Souan is the Island of Elephantine, which boasts of a small temple; and about

a mile beyond are some extensive quarries, in the midst of which stands a lonely obelisk of stupendous size. In the evening we were taken to see the best and most properly behaved dancing-girls in the country. These houris performed in a building of tolerable size, filled with an Ethiopian mob, who in a short time did not make us regret having brought our pistols—which invariably ought to accompany the traveller in all his excursions, as they carry considerable respect with them—for some misunderstanding having broken out between a native and our Maltese servant, a furious demonstration of popular indignation and threatening gestures took place, which ended in the Maltese diving at his antagonist's throat. We were of course here obliged to interfere, while a dozen knives gleamed around. Things were about this time getting serious and the mob furious, brandishing their weapons; yet the appearance of the eloquent mouths of our revolvers soon restored order, and the party soon broke up, the offended native still flourishing his knife in the distance.

On our way to the boat we found two dancing-girls on the top of a third, punching the head and ribs of their victim; but whether they intended it for

amusement or petty revenge we cared not to discover: we, however, rescued the wretched female, who, out of gratitude, offered us for sale, as a very *valuable antiquity*, the neck of an old soda-water bottle.

The next morning saw us on our descent of the river, anchoring at the town of Commumbo for the night. The following day we shot some teal and other wild birds, visiting also the ancient temple of the Ptolemies, which is small and of elegant structure, and adjoins the town.

The stream soon carried us floating in no very ship-shape order, sometimes broadside first, sometimes stern foremost, twisting and twirling with the eddies and currents down to Edfou, whose temple's magnificent propyla we had seen two hours before. After Karnak, this temple is considered the finest in Egypt. You enter by a splendid gateway between the propyla, half-choked up with the dust of ages, which partly concealed its grand proportions, and then find yourself in a spacious court, surrounded with galleries supported by massive pillars, each bearing different capitals: the pylon is of great height, and the hieroglyphics are deeply cut and very perfect. This temple is also the work of the Ptolemies.

LETTER X.

Keep silence, child of frivolity,—for Death is in those chambers.
Startle not with echoing sound the strangely solemn peace.
Death is here in spirit, watcher of the silent tomb.

The glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things ;
There is no armour against fate ;
Death lays his icy hands on kings.
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.
SHIRLEY.

— — —,

THE ruined city of El Kab was our next stoppage, near which are some curious grottos, containing the usual quaint paintings, fresh and bright from the hand of the artist of 3000 years ago ; the receptacle of the mummied inhabitants of the ruined walls that we explored on our way back, though nothing very remarkable can now be found among them.

We arrived at Esneh about two the next morning. Here another temple, but recently opened by Mehemet Ali, is to be seen, and the most impressive to my taste of any I have yet been to; though of no extent, its carved and blackening roof is supported by a cluster of the most perfect and massive columns, and which, upon entering the fabric from the blazing sun, loom grandly solemn amidst the surrounding darkness, for its windows and doors have been bricked up, besides its being built upon the level of the river. The people of the place are beginning to disturb the repose of its priests and worshippers, whose sacred and dusty persons are exposed in their broken coffins, which are cut to the shape of the body, and the likeness of the inmate painted outside,—the invariable custom of the old Egyptians. Jewels, golden images of their gods, and charms of great value, are frequently found in immense quantities buried with those of the richer class, and securely wrapped in the cloth of the mummy: the urchins and vagabonds of the country manufacture *imitations* of these antiquities, and sell them to the unwary traveller as genuine. I have heard that at Birmingham there is a great manufactory for these antiquities, which are sent out in

shiploads, and sold wholesale to the villages which boast of temples.

At Esneh one ragged wretch had, by some accident, picked up a French sailor's button, and naturally, being totally unconscious of its nature, offered it to me as an antiquity; he swore he had found it in a coffin, and with the most serious countenance demanded two shillings for it.

The next morning, the 6th of December, saw us again under the shadow of the temple of Luxor. We lost no time in securing a guide and horses, and were off to the Tombs of the Kings. The pass between the mountains for four miles before reaching them is one vast pile of rocky confusion; fallen and dreary, like the ruins of some former creation, fearful chasms yawn from the heart of rocks, and huge boulders impend, as if a touch would dash them to the chaos beneath, where mountains have fallen, strewing the ground in tremendous and wild disorder: around, tower the rugged peaks of that mighty Home of the Dead,—all is sterile, lone, and desolate. At length we halted at the entrance of the tomb of Memnon: the torches lighted, we descended, scrambling over the heap of rubbish that chokes the entrance to the

first chamber, whose walls are covered with kings, boats, crocodiles, gods, birds, beetles, beasts, and trees, all mixed up together, decreasing,

“Small by degrees and beautifully less,”

in marvellous though doubtful perspective; lower down is the second, which is much the same, and leads into the hall, which is still more spacious, illuminated with figures, carved, and painted with the most brilliant colours, which leave not a particle of the wall uncovered. Here stands the broken sarcophagus of Remesis V., whose sacred and mummied majesty has been torn out and carried away to amuse the people in England by being unrolled: he also was called Miamun or Memnon. Bruce's, or the Harpers' Tomb, from the figures of two old gentlemen, who have been strumming in a graceful though uncomfortable position for nearly 3000 years, is large, and of the same structure. Remesis III. was here buried. The other tombs, though smaller, are very similar, excepting Belzoni's, which is a grand and fitting resting-place for its royal dead.

The Hall of Beauty, approached through galleries

of 300 steps, awes you with its dark magnificence and the colossal figures on its walls. This hall, like those of all the other tombs, is deep, and far into the base of a vast mountain, the stupendous mass of which you almost *feel* is weighing over you. We could not, by the imperfect and flickering light of the torch, survey the whole minutely. But accurate descriptions of all these tombs will be found in Murray's excellent "Guide Book."

Upon emerging from the darkness of these tombs, the sudden glare of the blazing sun was perfectly maddening; nor could we take our hands from our eyes for some time: we, however, soon mounted our horses, and urged them onwards through this desert place towards the old temple-palace of Goorna, erected by Remesis III. 1235 B.C., and dedicated to Ammun, the Theban Jupiter. This ruined pile is entered through a small but elegant gateway into a variety of chambers, supported by rows of columns, its walls carved with the usual devices of beasts, fishes, and kings sacrificing to the God, who is sitting upright as if he had swallowed a poker.

From Goorna we cantered across the spreading

plain, the site of the world's once greatest city, over the mounds of rubbish which formed its teeming thoroughfares; all around, its porticoes and temples rise on the far horizon, upon scanning which, the eye cannot even *then* embrace what was once Thebes,—Egypt's gorgeous and kingly capital.

Every one has heard of *Thebes*, a name associated with his school hours; yet I suspect not many have any *defined* or *distinct* ideas connected with it, further than that it was a city whose opulence was almost fabulous, of which Homer sang and Herodotus penned; the chosen seat of government of the Pharaohs, who went forth through its hundred gates to war, and conquer the world; and that afterwards, during its decline and fall, Cambyzes the Persian defaced and marred the beauty of its splendid palaces, rifled and despoiled them of their riches and gates of silver, and cast down their statues;—those palaces, the remains of which rise still in the proud magnificence of Ruin, wherein the Pharaoh tyrant of the children of Israel* revelled in splendid luxury, and from whose halls he came forth to meet Moses and

* Thotmes III.

to endure the anger of God; and from whose gilded courts he had issued with his chariots and warrior host in pursuit of Israel; to be humbled, crushed, and destroyed amid the avenging waves of the Almighty displeasure.

LETTER XI.

Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit.*—VIRGIL.

And when they showed me this abhorred pit
Once fancied, here, at dead time of night,
A thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes,
Ten thousand swelling toads, as many owlets,
Would make such fearful and confused cries
As any mortal hearing it . . .
Should straight fall mad, or else die suddenly.

SHAKESPEARE.

A ruin—yet what ruin ! from its mass,
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been reared ;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appeared.
Hath it indeed been plundered, or but cleared ?
Alas ! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is neared :
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years man have reft away.
BYRON.

— — — ,

BUT to continue my narrative. Our guide,
who had little or no information, and, like a young

* "I was amazed, my hair stood erect, and my voice faltered in my jaws."

rook, was all jabber and dirt, pointed to a crevice in the side of the mountain we had approached. Upon entering, we soon after found ourselves in a square chamber; a torch illumining its dim recesses, we discovered an excavation in the floor, through which we let ourselves carefully down into a yet smaller space. The guide, who could not exactly explain the name of this place, pointed sternly to a dark hole, like a fox's earth. Having volunteered to be the first to enter this dismal place, I placed my feet in the mouth of this uninviting aperture, just sufficiently large to admit a little stouter man than myself; it being much steeper than I had imagined, I neglected to "look before I leaped," and let go my hold, disappearing like a shot. Happily the soil was soft and sandy, and the passage of no great depth, yet I was glad to find my feet once more on *terra firma*, although I stood in utter darkness, not knowing in the least where I was, anxiously awaiting the arrival of my companions and the torch; who soon came lumbering down, having wonderfully preserved the light of their candles—mine, of course, was extinguished in my rapid descent.

When we had sufficient light to look about us,

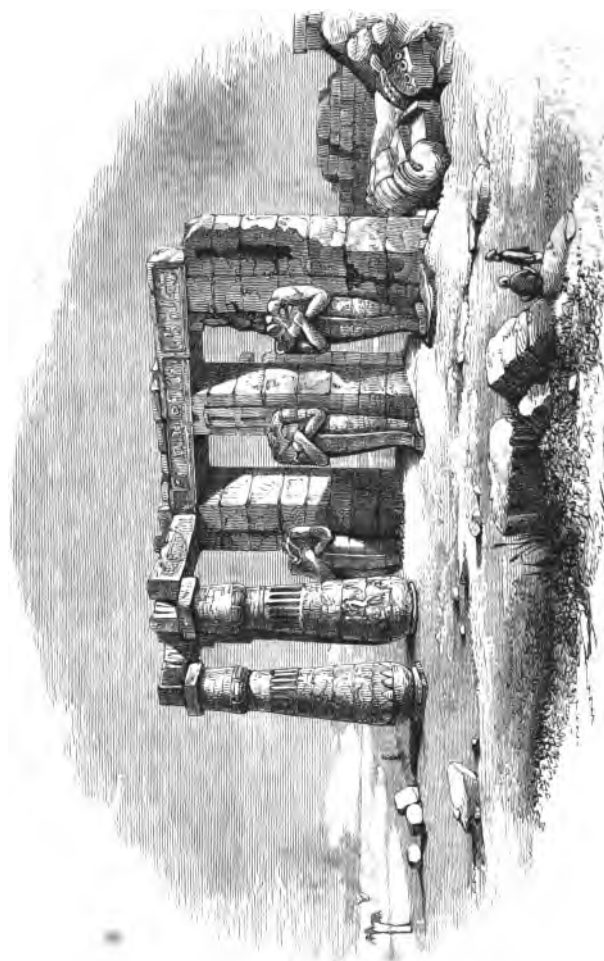
judge of our horror when the flame threw its flickering and uncertain glare over rows upon rows of shrivelled, distorted corpses, and blackening mummies, drawn up and contracted into every sort of fearful position: numbers were unrolled, and the ground strewn and covered with their loathsome remains, which crashed and crackled as our feet mashed, ankle deep, among the broken, decayed limbs and bones, torn and detached from their parchment-like bodies. At one time, upon touching a leg, the rest of the body and head moved, and bowed slowly forward, seeming to glare with its socketless eyes. One of my friends, stumbling with force, displaced a mummy, who probably had lain on its slab for thousands of years, and had become dry and brittle as tinder; the head snapped, nodded, and rolled at his feet. We were, in fact, in one of the hundreds of mummy-pits that honeycomb the mountains overlooking the plain of the great city, whose people from king to slave sleep alike, rolled, as in mockery of death, in one vast mausoleum of nature.

I need hardly say how glad I was to escape from this dark abode of death into the bright sunshine again, though it is curious to think that these ghastly

objects had lived, thought, and died, hundreds—nay, thousands of years—before the Saviour trod the earth, as the practice of mummification is of extremely ancient date.

With spirits as unflagging as the sun was burning we arrived at the beautiful old temple-palace of Memnon, whose halls and chambers, of the most light and symmetrical architecture, are supported by columns of colossal statues of Egyptian monarchs. Amongst the falling beauty of the ruins, the stupendous statue of Remesis III. lies as when the fury of a Persian invader first cast down this memorial of Egyptian grandeur, now strewing the plain with its own tremendous fragments. The surprising force of the manner of its downfall is evinced by the shivered throne and almost shapeless image of the colossal king.

How the old Egyptians could transport this mass of sculpture of 887 tons, from Assouan, a distance of 124 miles, and then erect its huge dimensions, is a subject of the greatest wonder and conjecture; neither are the means of its destruction scarcely less marvellous, the force of gunpowder being *probably* then unknown.



Temple of Memnon, Thebes.

Having lazily employed, as a means of mounting our horses, the *severed hand* of the royal statue, which is nearly eight feet in length, we directed our course across the cultivated ground to the Colossi of the Plain. There sits the Vocal Memnon and his more silent companion, as they have done through ages and ages, the wonder of the ancients, and favourite objects of the curious and the antiquarian of the present day. They are both, unhappily, defaced (as Strabo was told) by the shock of an earthquake; yet other writers attribute it, with more reason, to the destroying hand of the Persian king. They have since been patched up with bricks, which invest their countenances with a very blank and vacant expression. The most eastern of the two (from a sound it was supposed to have uttered at sunrise) has been called the Vocal Memnon, being a statue of that king; yet I suspect we may be allowed to believe as much of *this* information as we like.

Having taken our farewell of these two elderly gentlemen, we crossed the river and returned to the grateful shade of our good boat. * * * * To attempt to give the *faintest* idea of the great temple of Karnak, and the magnificent pile of its royal ruin,

far, far outsteps *my* powers of description; for to describe it I *cannot*, and beyond a few remarks shall only advise those who can, to come and see the grandest monument of the ancient and modern world. The gigantic perspective of the Great Hall, and the marvellous grandeur of its towering pillars, seeming as if they could support the earth, loomed black and awful before my bewildered vision from out the moonlit skies of one of the fairest of Egyptian nights. Long did I sit in a trance of reverential awe, to allow the airy phantasms of the splendour of ancient adoration, the gorgeous pomp of priestly pageants that once threaded those brilliant halls, darkened with the clouds of incense, and offering the blazing worship to their heathen gods—or the stately form of a proud and splendid Pharaoh monarch, sweeping with his jewelled throng through the courts of his amazing temple, *then* rearing in all its pristine glory,—to pass before me in the shadowy array of fancy.

The guide did not leave me long to my reflections, but led me half dreaming through vast areas and courts, in the midst of forests of crumbling pillars: onwards through enormous masses of ruin, by superb obelisks, and long avenues of colossal sphinxes. Some-

times as we rested, pylon, tower, and gateway arose from the horizon on every side, over all, as far as the eye can scan : this whole expanse of towering ruin comprises what was once the great temple of Karnak, in the building of which each succeeding monarch had endeavoured to surpass his predecessor in grandeur of design and magnitude of structure. There can be found on the surface of the globe nothing like it.

We, of course, afterwards visited this temple by daylight; yet, though it cannot lose any of its grandeur, a clear moonlight renders it more impressive.

The temple of Luxor is of far inferior scale, yet of great interest, containing some curious paintings of the ancient Romans, plastered over the carvings of the Egyptians; together with two gigantic busts, between which stands a fine obelisk, once the companion of the one which is now on the Place de la Concorde.

We left Luxor with a strong stream and a fair wind, on a beautiful evening, and it was with great regret that I saw the last temple of the Pharaohs gradually sink and fade with the sunset: a turn of

the river soon after veiled from my sight, probably for ever, the great and sacred plain of Thebes.

The temple of Dendera is of perfect architecture, and entirely characteristic of the time of its building, viz. the Ptolemaic period, which was to us entirely new, and of comparatively recent date, being erected about 51 B.C. ; yet it failed to interest me as much as it ought to have done, and sank nearly to *commonplace* with the wonders of Karnak so fresh upon my memory : it is about two miles from the shore, on the bank opposite to the town of Keneh.

LETTER XII.

To their left rose the venerable Pyramids, whose imperishable masses have survived the fate of so many vast empires, braving the outrages of Time. Behind their right flowed the Nile, the city of Cairo, the hills of Mokattam, and the fields of ancient Memphis.—CHANNING, *Battle of the Pyramids*.

— — —,

FROM Dendera we flew as fast as the stream and a strong fair wind, which latter arose in the night, could carry us (passing Girgeh), to Siout, having accomplished a distance of two hundred miles in two days and two nights, *including stoppages*—a speed which seemed to astonish every one who heard of it on the way. One of the stoppages included was, upon passing a sandbank between Keneh and Girgeh, two fine crocodiles, and a smaller one, were discernible, basking in the sun; they were lying so lifeless that

they appeared like huge logs of wood. A great flurry and excitement immediately ensued, amidst loud cries of "Timsah ! Timsah !" Our guns were instantly loaded, and the small boat lowered ; three of us, with the utmost caution, having warned the crew to silence, swiftly made for a projection of the bank, out of sight and within a quarter of a mile of the monsters. Slowly we crept along, stalking them amidst bushes and dry shrubs, till we arrived within about forty yards of the reptiles, when they commenced trailing their dark, ponderous lengths, into the water. Two of us fired, both balls gliding off the scaly backs of the largest pair. Three in a moment dived ; but having learnt that a crocodile *once wounded* of a certainty rises again within a short time, we lay down behind a bush, anxiously awaiting their return. In ten minutes, a long dark line appeared in the water, about forty-five yards from us ; the back, with its great spikes, rose gradually, till half the head and body were above water. We all three fired nearly at the same moment, my friends' shots taking him on the water line in his side, my own ball taking effect upon his shoulder. The water was immediately lashed with the furious convulsions of the enormous beast, which

instantly disappeared, and was, as near as we could judge, quite twenty-five feet in length.

One of my friends now moved still lower down towards the beach, so as to obtain a more advantageous position when he rose again, while my other companion remained where he was, myself moving to the other side of them both. A short time elapsed, when a long jaw and back appeared floating on the surface, opposite where I was concealed. I paused, and fired, my ball hitting him in the lower part of his side, which had risen above the water; his whole tail and body were twisted and raised, lashing the water as he writhed with pain in his headlong plunge downwards. My friend, from his new position, once more wounded the other in the head; the smallest never again appeared.

We knew how nearly impossible it is to bag a crocodile in this manner: in the first place, many of the shots glide off his scaly armour harmlessly, unless taking him in a tender point; secondly, *should* he be killed, he will sink, and not rise till the gas within the body brings it to the surface, though not, perhaps, for several days; so, not having much time to spare,

we were obliged to give up the chase, and pulled back to our boat. I considered it an epoch in my existence having severely wounded two of these reptile monarchs.

At Beni-Hassan are the celebrated grottoes, which, after a steep walk, *we* found to be holes in the rock, with nothing in them; they were formerly used for burying the dead. The walls are covered with dilapidated paintings of very primitive design, the colours still fresh and bright. The building of these tombs, or caverns, is attributed to the architectural whims of Thothmes III. (the Pharaoh of the Exodus) and of preceding kings. The inhabitants of Beni-Hassan are great rogues and thieves; the town, for this cause, was destroyed by Ibrahim Pasha twenty-five years ago, but since rebuilt. This is the most northern part of the river in which crocodiles are found.

On November 15th we again anchored off Boulac, and, of course the next day was devoted to the inspection of the town of Cairo, and were nearly bewildered as we mingled with the millioned and coloured throng, hallooing and jostling through the narrow, teeming bazaars, where every costume on earth walks

alike unheeded.* People must generally attach considerable ideas of magnificence to the interior economy of *Grand Cairo*; let them seat themselves with us, cross-legged, on the dirty shop-board of the venerable Abdallah, of whom, for the sake of his white beard and reverend appearance, we made a few purchases, smoking his offered chibouck, and drinking his essence of coffee, view the scene, whilst through the narrowest and dirtiest of streets (across which opposite neighbours shake hands in the morning) passes the incessant, babbling masquerade.

The shops, like the portholes of a man-of-war, are occupied by the merchants and venders, who lazily smoke through the entire day, yet scarcely speak a word to one another.† Many of the houses seem falling to decay, black in their helpless ruin and neglect. Numbers of beggars and children, in every stage of disease, throng the place; whilst an occasional leper, from whom the crowd open and fly, passes. All this forms a dirty, though novel and cu-

* Not unlike the assembly attending M. Jullien's *bal masqué* at Drury Lane.

† If you appear content, and remain in dignified silence, you are considered a most agreeable person.

rious *ensemble*, yet still is not worthy of grand encomiums; it is nevertheless amusing, as you are borne onwards by the irresistible stream through the labyrinths of bazaars, in which everything appears like a confused dream.

A stroll up the steep ascent to the citadel, or great mosque, which is now being built of white marble, is well repaid by a splendid panoramic view of the whole of the city of Victory; and far away is seen the Nile, winding till it is lost in the yellow mazes of the Libyan desert, along whose edge stretches a distant line of pyramids, from the great ones at Geezeh to those of Sakhara; while on the right the eye scans the far level land towards the Delta and the land of Goshen. Joseph's well is also near the citadel, and shown as the spot where the Holy Family rested on their flight to Egypt, and where every Englishman cuts his name. Adjoining is a ruined court, where the splendid body of Memlook cavalry were massacred by the orders and before the eyes of Mehemet Ali.

From hence we traced our way to our boat, through a maze of filthy streets, opening at length into a boulevard shaded with acacias, which surrounds a considerable part of the town.

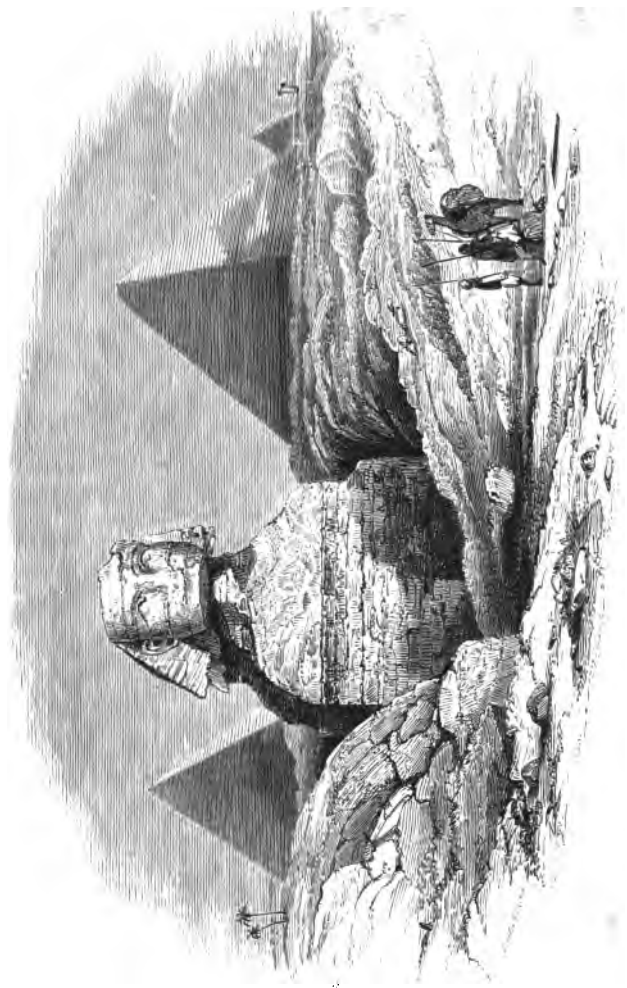
The next day rose fair and bright, and by noon we had reached the base of the Great Pyramid. Upon approaching these stupendous heaps, one is surprised at their not apparently increasing in size, and it is not until one stands at the base itself that their enormous bulk is felt and understood, as the whole mass frowns over you, tapering to the skies.

A few minutes' rest recruited us, and we began the ascent of the Great Pyramid of Cheops, erected by that king about 2000 years B.C. The convenience of having an Arab to each hand, hauling us up in front, with another unceremoniously propelling us in the rear, considerably assisted our laborious ascent, the steps being irregular and broken, many reaching to the breast; yet these Arabs know every one, and think no more of it than going up and down stairs. Upon reaching an excavation in the masonry, called the "Half-way House," one's *intense ardour* for the sublime begins to abate; looking down from the already giddy-sloping height, and then upwards to the seemingly never-ending pinnacle, it appears almost insurmountable: yet after ten minutes' more toil through the meridian blaze one feels as happy to find one's self stretched upon the summit, as you do upon

the most comfortable sofa in a drawing-room. One here breathes delightfully fresh air, and finds an accommodating Arab who, for the sum of five piastres,* runs down from the top of the Great Pyramid and gains the summit of the other in eight minutes!!

We were delighted, in course of time, to arrive upon *terra firma*, when we commenced an inspection of the interior; which consists of a very laborious process of crawling upon the hands and knees through the steepest passages, like enormous rat-holes, merely for the purpose of descending others, at the same time being painfully uncertain as to the probable extinction of the candles amidst the foul air and dust. I can only remark, that *those people* who derive pleasure from groping and crawling about in the dirt of the inside of this heap of stones, must have a very *limited* idea of amusement. I myself was disappointed at the comparative smallness of the Sphynx to what I had read of and expected; it stands an eighth of a mile from the Pyramids; the countenance, from a severe blow on its nose and other contusions, renders it not unlike a prize-fighter's after his thirtieth round, and still serenely smiles amidst the surrounding desolation,

* Fourpence-halfpenny.



The Sphinx.

which has been partially relieved by the excavations now under the superintendence of a French antiquarian, who has recently discovered a temple buried in the sands, which have been swept over it by the storms of centuries, and long suspected to exist by Belzoni and other *savants*.

This excursion being the last undertaken by us, in the land of Egypt, I beg leave to close these slight mementos, humbly apologising for the tediousness which I fear will be experienced by all those who honour them with their perusal, for whose patience and efforts I return the most grateful thanks.

CONCLUSION.

My task is done—my song hath ceased—my theme
Has died into an echo ; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath lit
My midnight lamp,—and what is writ, is writ,—
Would it were worthier !

BYRON.

How beautiful is the calm, thoughtful poetry of youth, the thorough appreciation of the Beautiful and the Good, which the old and staid matter-of-fact part of the world know only as the romantic enthusiasm common to it ; and then a sneer curls their cold lips, springing from hearts whose every soft emotion has long dried up and withered. It is that they *deride*, because they have ceased to *feel* those bright and joyous dreams of the Imagination—those cravings after the bright ideal—“*the desire of the moth for the star*,”*—which once floated over the past meditations

* Shelley.

of their own golden youth ; and, alas ! but too quickly glide onwards and are lost, like the light and fleecy clouds of an Athenian sky. It is in age that we can the better bear disappointments ; having tasted often of the cup of sorrow, we become accustomed to its bitterness. And yet, if it were not for disappointments there would be but little true pleasure in existence ; for the clouds of sorrow and care which occasionally obscure the sunlight of our happiness, render its pleasures the sweetest when they return. And yet, *why is there no permanent happiness upon earth ? Is Pain always to tread upon the heels of Pleasure,** and Happiness and Knowledge ever to war with each other ? Oh, curse of knowledge !—knowledge which gives man power, yet makes him miserable ! Ye visions of my childhood ! stay—oh, stay ! dreams, innocent and bright, oh, fade not before me ! let me cherish my illusions, and heed not the future. Oh, make me a child once more ! when, if the sun rose brightly in the heavens, I cared not for the clouds of the morrow ;—and when the light breezes of care fanned but softly through the calm skies of my youth, and the thoughts that the bitter tempests of life would ever

* Bulwer.

dim eyes bright with the heart's innocence, or would ever indent a brow on which nought but the sunshine of hope and confidence had yet shone, seemed as incomprehensible as Eternity. Oh! who has not looked, when in the sere and yellow leaf, upon the bright blossoms of life, and not longed for *bygone days*? when, as tender flowers, they sent forth their sweetest smiles to greet the warm beams of affection, basking in the halo of love which embraced them; rearing their heads, modest and grateful, to the heaven which watched over them, but without which the dire frost of *neglect* strikes the opening bud in the morning of its helplessness,—it droops, withers, and dies. Who has looked upon this without some pang of regret? None, but those whose hearts are as cold as the *grave*, and as *hard* as the marble above it.

J. W. CLAYTON.

Go, little book, from this my solitude!
I cast thee upon the waters, go thy ways;
And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
The world will find thee after many days.

BYRON.

